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from Robert Stephens
SEVENTEEN
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Jan'y 1833
AGAINST

POPERY,

PREACHED AT

SALTERS-HALL,

In the Year MDCCXXXV.

By the following MINISTERS;

VIZ.

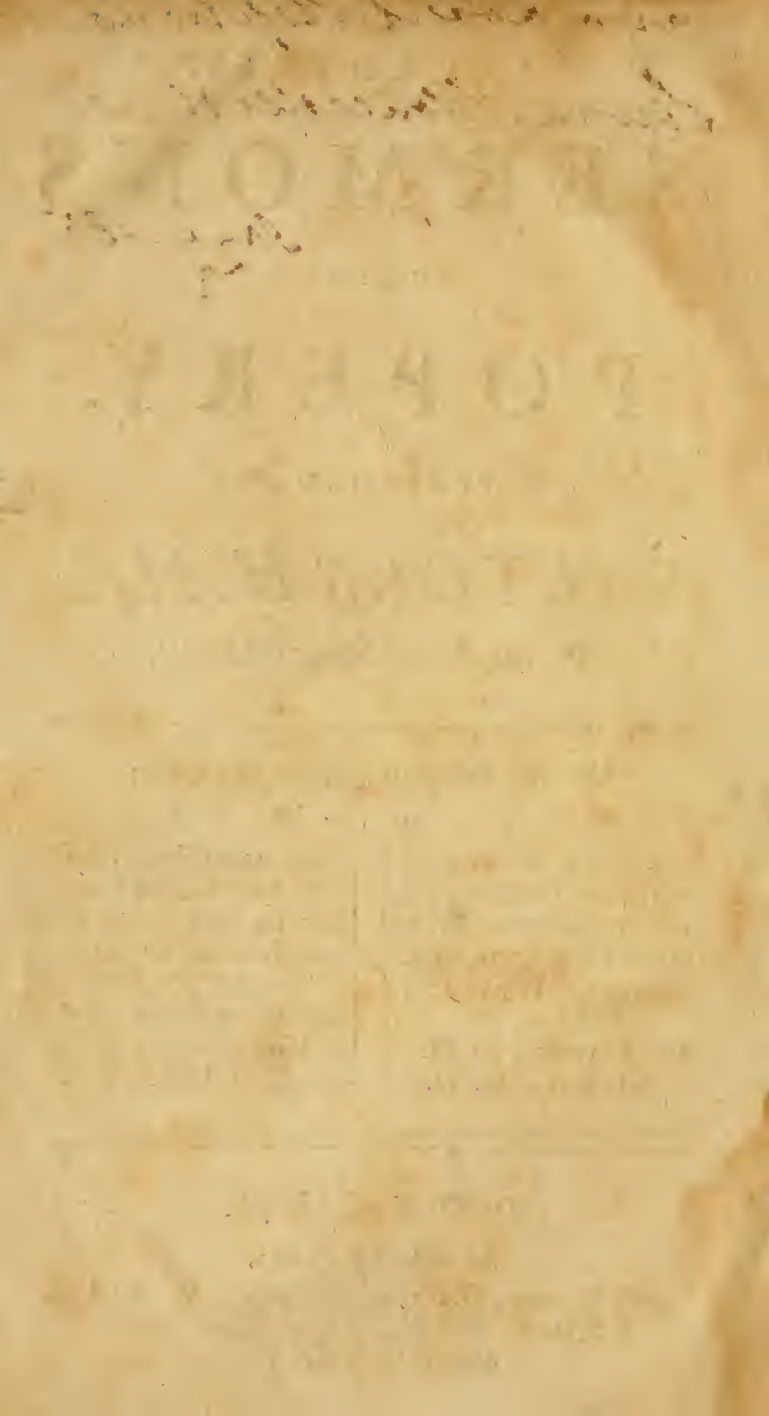
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Mr. SAM. CHANDLER,		Mr. JOSHUA BAYES,
DANIEL NEAL, M.A.		Mr. JO. BURROUGHS,
GEORGE SMYTH, M.A.		Mr. JOHN NEWMAN,
SAMUEL WRIGHT,		J. EARLE, D.D.
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MDCCXXXV.



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POPERY *the great Corruption of Christianity.*

A
S E R M O N

PREACH'D AT

Salters-Hall, Jan. 9, 1734-5.

By JOHN BARKER.

2 COR. xi. 3.

But I fear, lest by any means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve, thro' his subtilty; so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

PURSUANT to the Notice which has been publicly given in the several Congregations of Protestant Dissenters in and about this City, I appear here to-day; not so much to begin the Course of Sermons intended to be preach'd in this Place every *Thursday* Morning, against Popery, for some Time to come, as to introduce this Design, and to let you know what you are to expect on this Occasion, and what has

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induced

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induced so many of us to engage in this Business at this particular Juncture. Now I may venture to tell you in the general, and at present, That you may expect to hear, so far as these Sermons go, the Protestant Religion defended, and the Popish Religion fairly charg'd; fully heard, and solemnly condemn'd, as the grand Apostacy of the Christian Church, a gross Corruption of Gospel Simplicity, and a wicked Design to raise the Authority of Men upon the Ruins of the Authority of Christ, and to increase their Wealth, Power, and Grandeur in the World, at the Expence of all Civil and Religious Liberty. So odious and dangerous a Thing is Popery; and therefore Papists must excuse us, who are thoroughly persuaded of this sad Truth, if we expose and treat it accordingly.

Yet this I will venture to say, and I would chuse to say it here, That we bear no ill Will to the Persons of Papists, and how ill soever we think of their Religion, we pity them who profess it, as deluded People, and are grieved for *the Blindness that has happen'd to them, and for the Hardness of their Hearts*: They very well know, that much has been said and written by Protestants for their Conviction, and to take off the Veil from their Faces, and we charitably believe concerning many of them, that could they get rid of the Prejudices of Education; could they come at more and better Light; might they search the Scriptures, and were not their Inquiries prevented by the terrifying Apprehensions of Censure and Punishment, and were they not intoxicated with the Arts and Sophistry of crafty and designing Men, they would forsake this idolatrous and impure Communion, and readily embrace the Protestant Reformation.

Whether any Papists will attend this Lecture or no, I know not; many there are, it seems, both Priests and Profelytes, in and near this City; should the one Sort see fit, and the other be permitted to attend

attend this Service, I verily believe they would hear enough to convince any candid and unprejudiced Christian alive, that Popery is not the surest Way to Salvation, and that the Protestant Religion, which they so injuriously call *a damnable Herefy*, and so freely and frequently curse, is the very *Truth as it is in Jesus*, and that *Faith which was once deliver'd unto the Saints*. In this Faith we mean to confirm our own People; it is the Design of this Lecture to arm and guard Protestants against the Errors and Dangers of Popery; what therefore naturally arises from the Subjects in debate will be said freely, tho', I hope, Care will be taken not to transgress the Rules of Decency; and should Curiosity, or any other Motive, induce either Popish Priests or People to be present here, I dare say, they will have no just Cause to complain, that they are not treated in this Controversy either as Gentlemen or as Christians. Some of us have heard it has been objected, that any Opportunity of Conversation upon the Matters in dispute between us and the Church of *Rome* has been refus'd, when desir'd; but I believe there is no sufficient Ground for such a Pretence. We firmly believe we have great Advantage in this Controversy in Point of Argument, and this will be prov'd and maintain'd freely and fully, whether our Adversaries care to hear it or no. For if the Bishop of *Rome* will confidently assume what neither he nor any Man in the World has a Right to; if Popish Councils and Prelates will decree and impose Falseness, Absurdity, Contradiction, and I know not what Stuff and Trumpery, and this upon Pain of Damnation, and when they have it in their Power, enforce their Authority with all the Cruelties of Persecution, inhuman Torture, and Effusion of Blood, they must expect and bear to be told on't, and till they repent and renounce their Errors and Wickedness, they must stand charg'd with them, and with all the Infamy and Reproach these things

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deserve. I suppose they'll complain; but if they do, they are to be told, the Fault and Blame is theirs; and this will be shewn and proved to you from Authors and Records which Papists themselves allow to be approved and genuine.

But before I proceed any further in the Account I am to give you of this Lecture, I will a little consider the Text just now read: The Connection and Import of which you may take thus.

The Apostle *Paul* having understood that several great Disorders were crept into the Church of *Corinth*, and that the *Corinthians* had gotten a new Leader, or Leaders, amongst them, who opposed him, and raised a Faction amongst them, very much to their own Dishonour and his Prejudice, writes them two Letters; in the first of which he tries what Interest and Power he had in this Church, and attempts to break the Faction stirr'd up against him amongst the *Corinthians*, and to rectify their Disorders. Having succeeded in this Attempt, and found by *Titus* that they repented, submitted to his Orders, and were by his first Letter brought into a good Disposition of Mind towards him, he writes them this second Letter, in which he more freely justifies himself, and deals more roundly and sharply with his Opposers: This Design runs thro' the first seven Chapters of this Epistle, and being interrupted by an Exhortation to a liberal Contribution towards the Necessities of their poor Brethren at *Jerusalem*, is afterwards resum'd, Chapter the 10th, and continued in this: *Would to God* (says he) Ver. 1. *you could bear with me a little in my folly.* So he modestly calls his own Self-Defence, which if it had a Shew of Vanity they had made it necessary. *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy.* I fear lest the vilifying Speeches of my Adversaries should pervert and mislead you. *For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you*

you as a chaste virgin unto Christ. I have form'd you for Christ, and brought you to him, and am in care that you may not be drawn aside from that Subjection and Obedience you owe to him. *But I fear lest by any means,* i. e. some means or other, *as the Serpent beguiled Eve thro' his subtilty,* i. e. the Devil by the Serpent, under the Pretence of Kindness and other Arts, *So your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.* q. d. I fear lest your Hearts divide and rove, I am afraid of your being unchaste and corrupted. Christianity is plain and simple, and no impure Mixtures are to be made or allowed with it; no Jewish Observances, no human Inventions, no old or new Traditions; to this singly, without Addition or Alteration, should Christians stick and adhere, keeping to the Truth as it is in Jesus, and preserving the *Simplicity* of the Gospel, not mingling it with any Thing that is false and foreign to it, not concealing any Part of it, or mixing any Falshood with it, or wresting and perverting the true Sense and Meaning of it to serve our own Ends, the Lusts of others, or any worldly Purposes whatsoever.

Thus the Apostle shews his own fair Practice, and the false and fraudulent Behaviour of his Adversaries as to this in the 4th Chapter of this Epistle, 2d Verse, *We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

From the Text thus explain'd, I should be led to observe,

I. The Apostle's Account of the Gospel, or Christian Revelation, it is *the Simplicity that is in Christ.*

II. The Concern he expresses lest those who are in possession of the Gospel should be *corrupted from*

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the Simplicity of it. This he intimates by *godly Jealousy*, and *holy Fear*.

Now this as it gives one a pleasing and grateful View of the Gospel, and engages ones Heart to receive it on Account of its Plainness and Perspicuity, its Simplicity and Purity; so it shews us the great Duty and Business especially of Christian Ministers, and that is, to preserve the Simplicity of the Gospel themselves, and to warn and fortify all under their Care against every sinful and dangerous Corruption. I am strangely mistaken if Popery be not a gross Corruption of Christianity, and a most scandalous Departure from the Simplicity that is in Christ: In opposing therefore the Growth of this, carefully watching all its Motions, taking the Alarm ourselves and giving a faithful Warning to others when we see any of its Emissaries taking Pains to propagate this Religion, especially if they do it, or are likely to do it with any Success; is, no doubt, acting in Character as Christian Ministers, and doing the Duty of *Watchmen*, *Overseers*, *Shepherds*, and *Stewards* who are intrusted with the rich and invaluable Treasure of the Gospel, and of whom it is required that they be found faithful to God and Christ, to their own Souls and the Souls of others.

Permit me to give you only a short and general View of Popery under the following Heads, and then leave you to conclude, Whether it be not a Corruption of the Simplicity that is in Christ.

1. Many Doctrines of Popery are false and absurd.
2. Popish Worship is idolatrous.
3. Many Practices it recommends are impious and wicked.
4. The Spirit of Popery is tyrannical, domineering and cruel.

1. Many

I. Many Doctrines of Popery are false and absurd. There are, I acknowledge, some common Christian Principles in which Protestants and Papists both agree; such as the Being and Perfections of God, the Truth and Inspiration of the Scriptures, the Doctrine of the Trinity, and that of the Death, Sufferings, and Satisfaction of Jesus Christ the Son of God, our only Lord and Saviour; but then Popery corrupts so as well nigh to destroy some of these, and adds many others which are both false, absurd, and dangerous. *For instance*, Papists own the Bible to be the Word of God, and they allow that *all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God*; but then they make the Scripture to depend upon their Church both for the Authority, Truth, and Sense of it. Take away, says the Jesuit, (whom the celebrated Mr. *Chillingworth* so effectually answered) the Authority of the Church, and no Man can be assured that any one Book or Parcel of Scripture was written by divine Inspiration. * And then they make themselves the only Interpreters of Scripture. The Council of *Trent* is a little upon the Reserve as to the former Point; but as to this, it declares roundly, that it belongs to the Church to judge of the true Sense and Meaning of Scripture. † So that we are never the better for our Bible, till they have put a Sense upon it for us. And as to the Doctrine of Christ's Sufferings and Satisfaction for Sin, it is so corrupted with their impure Mixtures of Merit, Indulgence, and Absolution, as greatly to dishonour the Merits, and eclipse the Glory of the blessed Redeemer. And besides the pure Doctrines of Christianity which

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they

* *Knot* or *Wilson* the Jesuit, in his *Mercy and Truth*; which Mr. *Chillingworth* answered in his celebrated Piece, entitled, *The Religion of Protestants*.

† *Ecclesiæ est judicare de vero sensu & interpretatione scripturarum sacrarum. Sess. 4ta.*

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they corrupt, what a spurious Offspring do they add---such as those of Tradition, the Seven Sacraments, which are Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony --- All these the Council of *Trent* declare to be Sacraments; and if any one says they are not so, that they are superfluous, or do not confer Grace, let him (says these Doctors) be accursed. * Add to these --- The Doctrine of Transubstantiation, Communion in one kind, Veneration of Saints and Images, Prayer in an unknown Tongue, auricular Confession, Purgatory; but above all, those of the Supremacy of *St. Peter*, and the Infallibility and Authority of the Church; and you will soon conclude what a Corruption there is in Popery of the Simplicity of the Christian Doctrine.

2. The Worship of the Church of *Rome* is idolatrous. The Scriptures teach us that God is the only proper Object of Worship: *God is a Spirit, and to be worshipped in Spirit and truth. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* And they teach us, That Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Saviour of Men, and our only Mediator and Advocate with the Father: *There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* This is the pure and simple, the plain and unmixed Doctrine of the Gospel: But Papists misapply their Worship, and give that Honour to Creatures which is due to God alone. They have a great Catalogue of Saints, whom they admit into that Order by a solemn Canonization, and then account them Objects of Worship and Intercessors in Heaven for the Church on Earth. The Council of *Trent* determines, that it is good and profitable to invoke the Saints, and declares, that whoever says this is Idolatry, or contrary to the Word
of

of God, or the Honour of Christ, they do *impie sentire*, their Sentiments herein are impious and wicked. * This is their Doctrine, and they practise accordingly. They have stated Offices and Forms of Prayer, according to which they worship their Saints. Sometimes they pray to particular Saints, sometimes by this and the other Saint, sometimes they join God and the Saint, sometimes not ; but I will only mention one general Form ; it is this : “ O all ye Saints and Elect of God, I beseech you by the Love wherewith he hath loved you--- “ help me most miserable Sinner before Death shall “ snatch me hence, and reconcile me to my Creator, before Hell shall devour me.” † Is this acceptable to God ? Is this honourable to Christ ? Is not this Idolatry ?

3. Popery recommends many impious and wicked Practices. The Simplicity of the Gospel, as to Practice, lies very clear and plain before us. The Scriptures teach us the Duty God requires of Men, and they strictly and solemnly require of us Purity of Heart, and Holiness of Life ; Repentance towards God, Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and unfeigned, impartial, uniform, and persevering Obedience. The two grand things in Religion are Knowledge and Practice. Christianity is a vital, practical thing. We are nothing and do nothing, if we do not aim and labour after *all holy conversation and godliness*. *The grace of God, i. e. the Gospel or Doctrine of Grace, hath appeared unto us, bringing salvation, and teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world.* Well, this is true, you'll say, and to be taken on all hands for granted ; but how does this affect Popery ? Are there not holy and good Men of both Communions ? And are there not bad of both ? Ungodly, dishonest, intem-

* Sess. 25. Decret. de Invoc. Sanct.

† Hor. B. Virg. Sec. us. Sar. p. 71.

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temperate Protestants as well as Papists? Is there much to chuse in this Point? Will you put us upon counting Numbers on both sides? Can you say the generality of Protestants are virtuous and good? Have Protestant Countries that *righteousness* amongst them *which exalteth a nation*, and are they in a remarkable and distinguishing manner clearer than Popish ones, from those *sins that are a shame to any people*? Or is the personal Character of a Protestant always or generally better than that of a Papist? Now here, I confess, I very much wish. I could make a better Apology for Protestants than I am able. I wish I could more unanswerably appeal to Facts and Numbers on this Question. Would to God the People of our Communion would lay this Matter to heart, and that there were fewer ungodly, dishonest, intemperate and perfidious Protestants in every Place, and every Day than other! --- But when I have admitted this Charge, I must take leave to add, that there are some sad Truths to be told of Popery even here, which can't be either denied or excused. Protestants, however they Practise, are taught to keep the Commandments of God, and if they break any of them, it is no fault of their Religion: But Papists break the Commandments of God, and teach Men to do so, and their doing so is the fault of their Religion. Popery is itself subversive of practical Religion, and really teaches those things and allows those Liberties which naturally tend to and issue in all kinds of Sensuality, Worldliness, and Wickedness. Papists own one for Head of the Church, who can (they say) when he pleases, dispense with several Commands of Christ. *Bellarmino* says it may be affirmed in a good Sense, that Christ has given *Peter* Power, to make that to be Sin which is no Sin, and that which is no Sin, to be Sin. * The C. of *Trent* affirms---That the Church can dis-

* De Excusatione Barclaii, cap. 31.

dispense with some things forbidden about Marriage in the *Levitical* Law; and if any question this, or say the contrary, they are accursed; * and they have accordingly taken upon them to reverse many lawful Marriages, and make incestuous ones lawful: The Pope and the Church can (they say) absolve Men from the most solemn Vows, Oaths, and Contracts, and can dispense above and against Law, for this choice Reason---That the Pope's Tribunal and God's are but one. † The Papists likewise teach the bad Doctrine of Venial Sins, *i. e.* the Person who so sins is not so far guilty as that God can in justice punish him; he does not deserve one Stripe in Hell for Thousands and Millions of these Transgressions. Nay they go farther still, they grant Licenses to commit any sort of Sins. *Rivet* ‡ tells us he saw a Book at *Paris*, printed in the Year 1500 *cum privilegio*, where are taxed at a certain Rate all Absolutions in the Church of *Rome* for all sorts of Sins; and Dr. *Taylor* says that Pope *Innocent* the Eighth was either the Author or Enlarger of it. And to what do the Doctrines of Intention, Attrition, transferring of Merit, Absolution, and Purgatory tend, but to licentious Wickedness. I will conclude this Head with referring you to a Book, entitled, *The Practical Divinity of Papists proved destructive to Christianity and Men's Souls*, written by the Venerable Mr. *David Clarkson*, some time Tutor to Archbishop *Tillotson*, and I have heard, at his particular Desire; there you will see in a Variety of Instances, and by unquestionable Evidence, that Popery does most shamefully strip God's Commands of all their Authority, and disarm his Threatnings of all their Terror. I am to add lastly,

4. The

* Sess. 24. Can. 3.

† Taylor's Polem. Disco. 342.

‡ *Rivet's* Castigation of the Jesuit --- It is called, *Taxa Camera Apostolica*.

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4. The Spirit of Popery is tyrannical, domineering, and cruel; Papists not only make void the Law of God by their Traditions, and break the Commandments of Christ, and teach Men to do so, but they impose their Errors and Conceits, and bind them on Men's Consciences, and require an implicit Faith and blind Obedience. You must say you believe whether you do or no, and must understand with their Understanding, and contrary to your own, or else---What?---Not that which any reasonable Man would think, and has a Right to expect; not Argument, Reason, Scripture, and the Representation of Truth in a fair and convincing Light; but opprobrious Names, solemn Curses, a Sentence of Excommunication, and then cruel Usage, corporal Punishment, and every wholesome Severity, *i. e.* all Kinds of Persecution in their turns, and every Degree of it, against Reason and without Shame: Such as Imprisonment, Confiscation of Goods, Torture, Banishment, and at last Death by Sword or Fire, or in any inhuman or terrifying way whatever. Witness the History of several Ages and Nations, witness your Books of Martyrs, witness the Tragedies acted in *France* and *Ireland*, witness the Inquisition still subsisting, witness what your Fathers told you in their Day; and to confute the false Pretence imposed on weak Minds, that Papists are altered, and that Popery is now become mild and gentle, and Lamb-like, witness the poor Protestants of *Saltzburgh*, who are driven out of their Country at this very time, only for the Sake of their Religion, many of whom your own Eyes have seen, your Hearts pitied, and your Hands relieved. While Papists are inveigling and deceiving you they are oppressing and persecuting your Brethren, and actually doing where they have Power, what, where they have none, they artfully excuse, or confidently deny. But, Sirs, let it sharpen your Spirit ever so much against this
cruel

cruel and false Religion, it is true, unquestionably true, and beyond all Contradiction, that the very Spirit of Popery is a domineering, tyrannical, persecuting, and antichristian Spirit.

And thus I have given you a short and general View of Popery, and from this Account it appears to be a great Corruption of the Simplicity of the Gospel. But I have only touch'd upon these things, and barely shewn you the Surface of this corrupt Religion; my Brethren who follow me will enter more deeply into this Mystery of Iniquity, and carefully represent, and sufficiently confute and expose it.

But I am warranted from this Text to observe,

2. The Concern the Apostle expresses, lest the *Corinthians* should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ: *I am, (says he) jealous over you, and I fear lest your minds should be corrupted.* Jealousy is a Mixture of Love and Fear; by this the Apostle expresses great Concern for the Good of these Christians, and great Fear and Apprehension of their Danger. He took it to be one great part of his Business to give them good Advice and faithful Warning: *He watch'd for their souls as one who was to give an account.* His Jealousy and Fear made him attend with Diligence and Care, and use proper Application and suitable Methods for their Preservation; from this religious Concern arose this tender and affectionate Caution.

And that the Apostle understood it to be the Duty of Christian Ministers to do the same in like Circumstances, may appear from several Directions and Cautions, such as that *Acts* xx. 28, and following Verses, to the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*: *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall*

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shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock: Also of your selves shall Men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them: Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. Again, to the Church of Rome he thus writes, *Romans the 16th Chapter, the 17th and 18th Verses, --- Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them; for they that are such serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple, i. e. by flattering and colloquing Words they deceive the plain-hearted and harmless, who suspect no Hurt.* I beg leave also to observe, that *St. Peter* was of the same Mind, as appears from that humble and tender Exhortation in his first Epistle, 5th Chapter, 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th Verses. *The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly; not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.* I cannot pass over this Passage without observing the modest, humble, and condescending manner in which it is deliver'd, suitably to the Nature of the apostolick Office, which was a *service and ministry*, not a *sovereignty and domination*. But such are the confident Pretensions of the Bishops of Rome, that they claim the Title of Christ's Vicars, and the Administration of his Kingdom, by Virtue of a Succession from this Apostle. To which purpose they tell us---that our blessed Saviour before he left this Earth, delegated his supreme Authority to St.

Peter

Peter the Prince of the Apostles; and *St. Peter* fixing his See at *Rome*, and dying there, bequeathed this Supremacy to his Successors in that Chair to the End of the World: And therefore the *Romish* Bishop is the Head of the Catholick Church, his Empire the same with Christ's, whose Lieutenant and Delegate he is, and that all the Christian World ought to be subject to him upon pain of Damnation. And as the Successor of *St. Peter*, the Pope is accordingly call'd, his Holiness, the Sovereign Pontiff, our most holy Lord the Pope, and sometimes our Lord God the Pope; and (they say) all Laws human and divine are lodged in his Breast, and that it belongs to him to judge all, and to be judged by none. Exorbitant Pride! horrid Blasphemy! and wretched Abuse of a most pious humble Man! whose own Account of himself is only this---*Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ*. Well! is it not our Duty who are Christian Ministers to warn People of such dangerous Pride, Tyranny, and Blasphemy as this? Is not such daring Insult as this upon the Authority of Christ to be check'd? And are not the Corruptions, Errors, and Sins that grow out of this Stock to be exposed and rooted up? And should not Christian People be fed and taught more sincerely and more faithfully? If you think so, I now tell you this is the Design of this Lecture, and if you judge of it as we do, we hope you will encourage it, by attending here once a Week as long as it lasts, and by attending to the things that are spoken from the Word of God, this being all the Preachers expect from you as the Reward of our Labour.

But I will now enter further into the Reason of our preaching in this Manner against Popery, at this particular Juncture.

1. And I very freely declare, (and am glad at my Heart that I am able to do it fully and strongly) that
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it is not from any Apprehension that our Rulers favour Popery. This is not the Reason. We do not suspect that Popery has any Encouragement from that Quarter. Papists meet with no Smiles at Court, wherever else they find them: There was a Time indeed, (and some of us have Reason to remember it) when the Nation had terrifying Apprehensions of *this* Danger. *Charles the Second*, if he had any Religion, was a Papist: But his Brother, and Successor, abundantly discover'd that Popery was the Darling of his Heart, and that he was so set upon the Re-establishment of it here, as to venture at every thing. You know that King *James the Second* carry'd Matters so far as to receive a Nuncio from the Pope, and he sent an Ambassador to *Rome*; in his Reign Popish Bishops were consecrated in the Royal Chappel, and the free and open Exercise of the Popish Religion was every where set up. A first and second Declaration for Liberty of Conscience, against Law, and for the sake of Papists only, then came out; and many Bishops for petitioning the King to excuse them and their Clergy from reading the latter of these, were sent to the Prison of the *Tower*; which Event, as consequent upon many other illegal and arbitrary Proceedings, awaken'd the People of *England* to implore the Prince of *Orange* to come over and rescue the Protestant Religion and Liberties of *England*. He came accordingly, by the good Hand of our God upon him, and brought our Salvation with him: And were this a proper Time for it, I should remind you of the general Joy spread thro' the Protestant Nations, upon his being at length made and declar'd our King---How Providence carried that immortal Hero thro' a difficult Reign---How he asserted the Cause of Truth and Liberty---How he humbled the Power of *France*, form'd a Confederacy which broke the Scheme of universal Empire, and left us Men who learned of him how to defend

defend the Liberties, and revenge the Injuries of *Europe*. What followed upon the Death of the brave King *William*, who pursued his Scheme in the following Reign, and who eclips'd, at length, the Glory of his Successor, broke the Confederacy, and led us far back into great Danger of Popery and Slavery, you all know. But there was one Pillar of our Happiness erected by King *William* which those Managers had not Time to pull down, that was, the Protestant Succession in the illustrious House of *Hanover*. King *George I.* succeeded the dead Queen in Peace, and soon after he was seated on the Throne, wisely enter'd into Measures to rectify our disordered State, repair our tottering Constitution, strengthen the Foundations which had been treacherously weaken'd, and render those Means impracticable which had been us'd to pave the Way for a Popish Pretender.

His present Majesty peaceably succeeded his Royal Father, inherits his Virtues as well as his Crown, and lives and reigns the Patron of Liberty, the Guardian of our Laws, and the Defender of the Protestant Faith. It is now the Great Law of *England* --- And may it be as that of the *Persians* and *Medes*, never to be altered, --- That no Papist is capable of succeeding to the Imperial Crown of these Realms. It is indeed one Artifice of Popery, to try by any Means to make us careless, or indifferent at least, what Religion our Prince is of; and something of this sort has of late been hinted in that pestilent, malignant Paper, called the *Craftsman*. --- But *Englishmen* easily see through that Device; we too well remember our Danger in the *Stewarts* Reign, to believe this; we know the Absurdity and Inconsistency of a Popish Head to a Protestant Body, and are abundantly thankful to Almighty God for a Protestant King and Queen, surrounded with a large and lovely Offspring, adorned with Royal and Princely Virtues, and upon whom we

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look as, under God, the Strength and Glory of *Great Britain*, and the whole Protestant World. But further,

2. We do not now appear against Popery, from any Imagination that the Reformation from it has not been unquestionably proved to be highly reasonable and absolutely necessary. The Reformers waited till Error and Impiety came up to their height, and continued in the *Romish* Church till she was most wofully corrupted; and (as one expresses it) till her Wounds stunk, and became incurable; and then they departed from the *Tents of those Men, that they might not be consumed in their Sins*. And we not only approve the Reformation, and think it justifiable, but we heartily rejoice in it, and bless God, who inspired the Reformers with so much Zeal and Courage, and gave them such good and great Success. They bore a noble Testimony for God, they bravely contended for the Authority of Christ, and the Faith once delivered to the Saints, and finely pleaded the Cause of Truth and Liberty, against Men *who loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil*: Their Separation from the *Romish* Communion was unquestionably just and necessary, and the Charge of *Schism* and *Here-sy* exhibited against them on this account, was a most unjust Reproach, which they were well able easily to wipe off.

Nor do we forget the noble Stand made by the Clergy and People of *England*, against the return of Popery, in the Reigns I just now mentioned; the Reformation was then bravely defended, and this corrupt Religion effectually exposed with most solid Arguments, and the greatest Strength of Reason, by Men of the first Rank for Learning, Parts and Furniture. The Names of *Chillingworth* and *Barrow*, of *Williams* and *Tillotson*, of *Stillingsfleet*, *Patrick*, *Clagget* and *Sherlock*, who
all

all bore so considerable a Part, and made so good a Figure in the Popish Controversy, ought always to be mentioned, by all Protestants, with the greatest Honour; nor are *Owen* and *Clerkson*, and *Pool* and *Baxter* to be overlooked in this Controversy; they were worthy Men, and behaved well in a critical and dangerous Juncture. We have a great Cloud of Witnesses before us, for the Protestant Religion; we follow Men of Renown here; and it is indeed a Matter of some Wonder, that those Men, who so thoroughly disabled the Advocates for Popery, did not write that Religion quite out of the World! But it is not in all Cases enough, it seems, to refer People to Things done a good while ago; our Religion has, indeed, been well defended, and with great Learning and Labour; but particular Occurrences may happen, that make it exceeding proper to review such a Controversy as this, stir us up to imitate the Zeal of our Fathers, and examine the Ground we stand on, for our own fuller Satisfaction, and the Information of the rising Generation. And, which brings me to my main Point, such I apprehend is the present Juncture. Attempts are at this Time made every where about us, by Popish Zealots, to disease and unsettle the Minds of Protestants: We are well informed, that there are great Numbers of Popish Emisseries amongst us, many Mass-Houses in the several Parts of this City, and other Places, and Great Pains taken to reconcile Protestants to Popery, take off those Prejudices and Horrors they have been wont to conceive against it, and to abate by degrees, any Fears of fatal Consequences, if this Religion should be again established in *England*. Popish Catechisms, printed this very Year, and other Books which we have seen, and some of us have in possession, are put into People's Hands, full of Craft and of Assurance; and fresh Informations are frequently sent to many of us, of the great Diligence of

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the Papists at this Time, and beyond their usual Secrecy, to corrupt the meaner People especially, and to gain over Numbers to their Side. The just Charges we lay against Popery, they roundly deny; --- tell People it is now a quite different Thing than what it was formerly; and that they, good Men, have laid aside Cruelty and Persecution, and are for doing no Body any Hurt at all, but from pure Motives of Charity and Religion, induced to take unwearied Pains to recover Backsliders to the Fold of Christ. While Papists use the Subtilty of the Serpent, they would seem to be as harmless as Doves; and they appear on this side the Water in Sheeps Cloathing, who on the other are fierce as ravenous and devouring Wolves: One while they put on a grave and solemn Face, and tell People, that Salvation out of their Church is impossible; and therefore beseech them, for the Sake of their Souls, to embrace their Communion. At an other time, after courteous Behaviour, much civil Discourse, great good Manners, and a plain and easy Account of their great Power and Dexterity in helping People to Heaven, they strongly and boldly undertake for the Salvation of such as become Converts to them, believing and doing as they appoint and require, saying, --- You are secure of Salvation in our Church; your Happiness is undoubted and unquestionable; and, my Soul for yours, you shall not, and cannot miscarry.

These confident Undertakers would make People believe, that they can easily secure them from all Danger that arises from Ignorance and Wickedness; they have Indulgence and Absolution ready, and at hand, for all that; and the Priest, by the high and mighty Power he receives from the *Pope*, and *St. Peter*, especially at *Easter*, will make every confessing Sinner, for a small Sum, as sound and clean as when he came first into the World. If indeed there should be any doubting of the Truth
of

of this Religion, or the Power of the Priest and the *Pope*, and any Inquiry into and after the sacred Scriptures, those blessed Fountains of Light and Truth, this is a most dangerous Thing, this shews an heretical Disposition, and poor Souls are soon frightened out of it, with the dreadful Threatnings of Hell and Damnation. Thus is Popery founded in Ignorance and Wickedness, and supported by Craft and Terror.

Well, Sirs, we must not sleep while the Enemy sows these Tares. Error and Sin must not spread their poisonous Roots amongst us unrebuked! while Papists are diligent to deceive, Protestants sure should not be idle. A good Cause must not be left to shift for itself: It becomes us all to take some Pains, if we do indeed fear, that *as the Serpent beguiled Eve thro' his Subtility, so these Managers should corrupt our People from the Simplicity that is in Christ*. And sure I am, a Plea for Separation from the Church of *Rome* comes very naturally from our Quarter: Protestant Dissenters are exceedingly consistent in the Defence of Truth and Liberty against all Popish Domination and Tyranny: In this we may engage as a common Cause, without a Suspicion of private Interest or Party Views; and for my Part, I cannot but think the present Juncture a loud Call upon us, to lay aside all Differences among ourselves, if any such remain, when the common Enemy of Dissenters, and of all Protestants, is, I know not with what Views, making fresh and vigorous Attempts upon us. Besides, Silence at such a Time as this might turn to our Reproach: We might be supposed wanting in our Affection to the Government under which we have the Happiness to live, and in our Zeal against a Popish Pretender and his Adherents, if we did not appear with Readiness and Spirit on the present Occasion; nor is it a small Advantage and Encouragement to us, that we can appear for the Prote-

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stant Religion in the most publick Manner, without Offence to our Rulers, and that we are not under the same Inconvenience our Fathers were who pleaded this Cause in the Reigns of former Kings.

And now I have said what I think may be sufficient to let you into the Reason and Fitness of this Lecture against Popery at this Time. I beg Leave to add a Paragraph out of the Preface of the late Reverend Mr. *Bennet* of *Newcastle*, to his Sermons against Popery, ---- The Words are these ---- “ Had Popery been an old Here-
“ sy, dead and buried in the Church a thousand
“ Years ago, I would not have raked in its Ashes
“ and given it a Revival; but ’tis a living Reli-
“ gion, the Religion of a great Part of *Europe*,
“ and what has long been striving for more Room,
“ endeavouring to extend its Branches over di-
“ stant Countries, and spread its Poison thro’ the
“ Nations round about. And who knows not
“ that ever since our happy Reformation it has been
“ waiting for a Return amongst us, seeking an
“ Hole to creep in at; and even at this Time,
“ some think, they see it standing on tiptoes on
“ the other Side the Water, ready to make us an-
“ other Visit.” ---- This was written in the Year 1714; but, thanks be to God, before that Year concluded Things had quite another Aspect, the Protestant Religion (often rescued by Providence) was again preserved by the Protestant Succession taking Place, to the Joy and Surprize of us all, and to the Glory and Honour of God. O that ever memorable First of *August*! With what Agitation and Transport did we hear King *George* proclaimed? With what Gratitude did we then remember King *William* and receive his Legacy, and with what Ardour and Piety were our adoring Eyes and Hearts then lifted up unto God? One might have
guessed

guessed by the Countenances of those that met us, who were disappointed and who preserved.

Well, Sirs, the Corruption we then fear'd, it is the Design of this Lecture to oppose; the Blessings we then received, we are now setting ourselves to defend; and this we do, because wherever Popery sets up its Altars, Liberty and Religion are made a Sacrifice; as that rises those must fall: Popery threatens and grasps at all that's dear to us both as Men and Christians; no wonder therefore that if any, tho' it be but a distant Danger of this appear, such as we are alarmed, and seize the Opportunity to prevent its Approach by prudent Endeavours and fervent Prayers to the blessed God, whose Servants we are, and whose Cause in this World we believe to be that of Truth and Liberty. This Cause Protestant Dissenters humbly plead with God and Man well knowing it is our Interest and Duty so to do; for it is easy to foresee, if Popery should ever return hither, who are like to be its first, tho' not its only Sacrifice. In this Service then let us all agree; our Aim as far as I know is singly this, to warn Men of the present Growth and Danger of Popery; to shew them that this is just what it ever was, without any real Difference in either its Principles or its Spirit; to raise and animate that Zeal against it which seems too much abated; to find out its lurking Places, and root it out of Mens Hearts, and shew them the Use and Value of their Bibles ----- for the Bible, the Bible, (said Mr. *Chillingworth*) is the Religion of Protestants. This Papists conceal; this they corrupt and adulterate; to this they add, and from this they criminally take away; but this Protestants prize and contend for, as the great Rule of our Faith, the Charter of our Privileges, and the only Ground of our eternal Hopes: With this

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Sword of the Spirit, let us contend with Error and Sin ; from hence let us learn to preach, and pray, and live ; and when we have obtained *Mercy from the Lord to be found faithful, and having served God and our Generation according to his Will*, shall be dead and gone, may others rise up, and bear a Testimony for God and Christ, and true Religion, not only as we have done, but much more abundantly.

The

The NOTES of *the* CHURCH *considered.*

I N A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D A T

Salters-Hall, Jan. 16, 1734-5.

By *SAMUEL CHANDLER.*

Omnes confitentur, in sola vera Ecclesia esse veram fidem, veram
peccatorum remissionem, veram spem salutis æternæ.

Bellarmin. de Not. Eccles.

I TIM. iii. 14, 15.

*These things write I unto thee, hoping to come
unto thee shortly. But if I tarry long, that
thou mayest know how thou oughtest to be-
have thy self in the House of God, which
is the church of the living God, the Pillar
and ground of truth.*

YOU have been already informed, that the
Design of this Lecture is to represent and
expose the Absurdity, and antichristian Na-
ture of the Corruptions and Errors of the
apostate Church of *Rome*, and to confirm and esta-
blish you in the belief of those Doctrines of the
Reformation,

Reformation, which have the sacred Writings, and all the valuable Remains of Antiquity to support them; that you may be always upon your Guard, against the Attempts of those who lye in wait to seduce you from *the Simplicity* of the Christian Faith, to enslave your Consciences to the tyrannical Impositions of imperious and cruel Deceivers, and to bring you back to those impious Idolatries, which are a Reproach to the Christian Name, and contrary to the plainest Dictates of natural and revealed Religion.

One would really wonder, how so monstrous a Perversion of Christianity could ever take place, and by what kind of Arguments and Pretences, Mankind could be prevailed with to embrace and submit to a Scheme, which had they consulted their Senses or their Reason, or the sacred Records, they must evidently have discovered the Falseness and Imposture of; Popery being really an Imposition upon, and the most palpable Contradiction to the plainest Testimony of each of these Witnesses, as will, I doubt not, be fully demonstrated in the Course of the ensuing Lectures.

However, we are far from being ignorant of the *Devices of Satan* on this Head. Ecclesiastical History furnishes us with a Variety of Causes, to which this great Apostasy from the Christian Faith and Worship hath been owing, which well deserve to be distinctly considered, and represented to you. But I shall only mention that particular one, which is more immediately and directly to my purpose, which is *the Power and Authority of the Church*; or rather, the Superstition and Tyranny of the Bishops and Clergy, who have appropriated the Name of the Church to themselves, and under that venerable Character have erected themselves an Empire, upon the Ruins of primitive Christianity, and the civil and religious Liberties of Mankind.

And

And as it is but too true, that all the great Innovations, as to the Christian Doctrine and Worship, have been introduced by the Bishops and Clergy, under the sacred Character of the Church, and as the pretended Authority of the Church is *the Pillar and Ground* of the Corruptions of Popery at this Day, 'tis necessary that we lay the Axe to the Root, and distinctly consider these two Things,

I. What the true Notion of a Church is. And,

II. What are the peculiar Powers and Privileges it is invested with.

'Tis to the first of these I am confined. The second will be treated of distinctly by a very able Hand, with whose Province I shall as little as possible intermeddle.

I am then to consider what the true Notion of a Church is; or what are the essential Characters of the Christian Church, by which it may be known and distinguished from all other Assemblies and Bodies of Men whatsoever. And here the only possible Way of forming a true Judgment, is from the Holy Scriptures; because these are the most antient Records of Christianity, written by the Apostles and apostolical Men; and because they are, even our Adversaries being Judges, the infallible Word of God. Nor will they deny us the Liberty of judging concerning the Nature of the Church by this Rule, provided we will allow them these two small Things, *viz.* that the Church may judge for us concerning the Sense of Scripture, and that the unwritten Traditions of the Church are of equal Authority with the Scriptures themselves. And this possibly we might be willing enough to do, if this plain Contradiction was not unfortunately in our Way, *viz.* that the judging by Scrip-
ture

ture concerning the Notes of the Church, and yet allowing the Church to judge for us of the Sense of Scripture, is rendering it impossible to form any Judgment of either, and supposing that the Notes of the Church may be understood, before we know what in Reality they are.

For if the Scriptures are to determine the Marks of the Church, the Scriptures must be known and understood, before we can form any Judgment from them what the Marks of the Church are. But if the Church is to judge for us what is Scripture, and what the Sense of it, then we must know what the Church is, and what her distinguishing Marks are, before we can pretend to judge what the Sense of Scripture is. The Consequence of which is, that 'tis impossible to form any Judgment of either. We cannot judge of the Marks of the Church by the Scripture, because the Church is to determine the Sense of Scripture; nor can we judge of Scripture by the Church, because the Scripture is to settle and determine the Marks by which we are to know the Church. So that according to this Way of arguing, neither the Church nor the Scriptures can have any certain Marks to distinguish and discover them, whereby their Church will be of as little Signification and Authority, as they would fain have our Scriptures to be.

And by further Consequence, the pretending to prove by Scripture what the Marks of the Church are, and yet affirming that the Church is to judge of the Sense of Scripture, is supposing them to be both known before they are understood, and their Authority demonstrated even whilst it is incapable of being proved.

Once more, if the Scripture be the Rule whereby we are to judge of the Marks of the Church, the Authority of Scripture must be superior to that of the Church; and if the Church is to determine what is Scripture, and to judge of the Sense of it,

it, the Authority of the Church is superior to that of the Scripture; and consequently, they are each of them of superior and inferior Authority to the other; they are each of them a Rule by which to judge of the other, and yet can neither of them be a Rule whereby to form a Judgment of either. To these shameful Absurdities are the Papists reduced, by pretending to prove from Scripture, what are the Marks of the Church, and yet affirming, that the Church is to judge for all others what is the Sense of Scripture. But 'tis no wonder, that they who can be stupid enough to believe, that a Wafer can be changed into the Body and Blood and Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, should be disposed and given up to believe all other Absurdities and Contradictions whatsoever.

But to leave them in Possession of this Treasure, I shall come more directly to the Argument before me, and in prosecuting it, shall endeavour to do these two Things.

1. To set before you the Scripture Notion of a Church, and what are the peculiar and distinguishing Marks of it therein laid down. And,

2. To consider what are the Notes or Marks which the Papists give of a Church, and shew you either that they are no Marks of the Church of Christ at all; or if they are, yet that they are Notes or Characters which do not belong to the Church of *Rome*.

1. I am to set before you the Scripture Notion of a Church, and to give you the peculiar and distinguishing Marks or Notes of it, as there laid down. The original Word *ἐκκλησία*, which we render *Church*, denotes in general an Assembly of People called or met together, either upon civil or sacred Occasions. Thus the Town-Clerk of

Ephesus

Ephesus tells the *Ephesians*, that * *the law was open, and they might determine their causes in a lawful Assembly*. Hence the same Word is applied to any Number of Persons, more or less, who embraced the Doctrine of the Gospel, as preach'd to them by the Apostles, and worshipped God in the Name of Jesus Christ. Thus the first Converts at *Jerusalem*, who consisted of about 3000 Persons, † are expressly called the Church, because they were an Assembly or Congregation of Christians. And when afterwards the Apostles preach'd the Gospel in other Cities besides *Jerusalem*, the Number of Converts in each of those Places constituted a distinct Christian Church or Congregation, each independent of the other as to all things, their common Faith and Worship as Christians only excepted. Thus we read of the Church at *Antioch*, *Corinth*, *Ephesus*, and other Places, and of the Churches of *Galatia* and *Macedonia*, i. e. the several distinct Congregations of Christians in the several Cities of those Provinces. Yea when the Number of Converts in any Place did not extend beyond the Branches of any one particular House or Family, those Converts, though few in Number, are also called a Church. Thus we read of the Church at *Priscilla's* House, in the House of *Nymphas*, and with *Philemon*. And as all particular Churches or Congregations of Christians where-ever planted, were united in one common Faith and Worship, under Jesus Christ their common Lord and Head; as they were Congregations gathered in his Name, and professing a Religion of his Appointment; as they were all Subjects of his Kingdom, and governed by one Body of Laws, hence the whole Number of Christians, wheresoever they dwelt, are also denoted by the same Word, Church or Congregation; because though as to themselves they were particular independent

* Acts xix. 39.

† Acts ii. 47.

pendent Assemblies, yet consider'd in their Relation to Christ, their common Head, they were all one Body, under his especial Influence, Protection, and Government. In this Sense St. Paul uses the Word Church, when he tells us, * that God hath put all things under Christ's feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his Body. And this is all the Senses in which the Word ἐκκλησία or Church is used in Scripture, except only once, where it seems to denote the Place where Christians met for Worship. When ye come together in the church, says St. Paul, † I hear there are divisions among you, which he explains a Verse or two after, ‡ When ye come together in one place. In other Senses the Word is not used in the whole New Testament.

And I observe this principally for this Reason, because though the Clergy have oftentimes appropriated to themselves the Name of the Church, exclusive of the Christian People, yet they are never once called by this sacred Name in the holy Scriptures. Yea, I find that the Christian Laity are stiled the Church by Way of Distinction from those, who had any particular Charge or Office in it. Thus when Paul and Barnabas came to Jerusalem, they were received § of the Church, and of the Apostles and Elders; and when the famous Decree was sent to Antioch, ¶ the Apostles, Elders and whole Church sent it by Messengers of their own. From which Passages it appears, that the Christian Laity are properly and truly the Church of Christ, in the Scripture Sense of the Word; and that neither Apostles, nor Bishops, nor Elders are any otherwise to be consider'd, or own'd as the Church, than as they are united with the Body of Christians in the same common Faith, Profession and Hope.

And

* Eph. i. 22, 23.

† 1 Cor. xi. 18.

‡ Ver. 20.

§ Acts xv. 4.

¶ Ver. 22.

And this *Bellarmino* is so very sensible of, that though he produces the Words of my Text, *The church is the pillar and ground of truth*, as a Proof that the Clergy in a general Council cannot err; yet he doth it, not by asserting that the Word Church signifies the Clergy or Bishops, but that the whole Authority of the Church or Christian People * exists *formally* only in the Prelates, even as the Light of the whole Body is *formally* in the Head; the good Cardinal taking it for granted that all the Christian People are stark blind, and thence shrewdly inferring that they are obliged to see with his, and his Brethrens Eyes.

But as 'tis one Part of the Character of a good Protestant not to renounce the Testimony of his Senses, nor to trust to other Persons Eyesight whilst he has Eyes of his own, so we can evidently discern that this, and many other such Texts prove nothing about the Clergy's Infallibility; but that if *the church* is declar'd by St. Paul to be *the pillar and ground of truth*, this refers to the Body of Christians professing, maintaining, and *holding forth* the true Faith of Christ, and not to their Bishops and Pastors in Contradiction to them. Though I think the more probable Interpretation is, that *the pillar and ground of truth* relates to *Timothy* himself and not to the Church. The Direction to *Timothy* was how to behave himself in the house of God, and the Advice which the Apostle gives him was suitable to this Representation of the Church, viz. he was to behave as one who was a pillar in or foundation of that House; which *Timothy* properly was, as an Evangelist and Prophet, and one who received his Instructions immediately from an inspired Apostle, and was himself favour'd with some extraordinary Gifts of the holy Spirit. And what
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* *Tota auctoritas ecclesiae formaliter non est nisi in praelatis, sicut visus totius corporis formaliter est tantum in capite. l. 2. c. 2.*

confirms this Sense is, that St. Paul, * speaking of James and John and Peter, says, they seemed to be pillars. And indeed this Character of Pillars is frequently applied by the primitive Writers to the Apostles, as I could easily shew, were it not foreign to the present Purpose.

But not to insist on this, you plainly see from what I have said, that according to Scripture, every particular Congregation of Christians is a distinct and proper Church; and that the catholick or universal Church consists of all the several Congregations of Christians throughout the World, who all together constitute that one Body, of which Christ is the proper Head and Governor; and that therefore the Clergy's assuming and appropriating this Name to themselves, is an Usurpation of that Honour and Privilege which Christ hath conferr'd on you; on you, fellow Protestants, whom *he hath purchased with his blood; in whom ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, and a peculiar people; that true church of the living God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.* And this is

1. One essential and unalterable Mark or Note of a Christian Church or Congregation; viz. the constant and firm Adherence of all the Members of it to Jesus Christ, as the common Head and Lord and Saviour of Christians, and the submitting themselves wholly and intirely to his Influence and Direction; even as the Members of a natural Body are guided and acted by its natural Head. For we *being many are one body in Christ*, and God hath given him † *to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who filleth all in all.*

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* Gal. ii. 9.

† Eph. i. 22, 23.

And this I rather observe, because *Bellarmino* thus defines the church: * *That 'tis an Assembly of men, professing the same Christian faith, under the Government of lawful Pastors, and particularly the Roman Pontiff, the only Vicar of Christ upon earth.* But could the Cardinal imagine, that this would be taken for granted without Proof? Or that any one, who had ever read the New Testament, would prefer the Pope, who is never once mentioned in it, to the Son of God himself, who is expressly declared to be the Church's Head?

No: The vicarious Power of the *Roman Pontiff* is a thing absolutely unknown to the Sacred Writings. 'Tis a sacrilegious Usurpation of that supreme Authority with which God the Father hath invested his only Son, to whom only our Submission is due in the great Concern of Religion, and eternal Salvation, in Opposition to the Claims of all others, who would exclude him from the Government of his Church, or share with him in his legislative Power. *Neither be ye called masters, for one is your master, even Christ,* † are the Words of our Lord himself to his Disciples. And *St. Paul* tells the *Ephesians*, ‡ that God had raised *Christ from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, ----- and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church:* Head, as Governor and Lord, to appoint the Laws of his spiritual Kingdom, the Doctrines of his People are to believe, the Form of Worship they are to observe, and the Terms of Communion and Christian Salvation, by which all the Members of his Church are to be finally and eternally determined.

And as he sent out his Apostles in his Name, and as his Witnesses, and under the Conduct of his infallible

* *Ecclesiam veram esse cœtum hominum ejusdem Christianæ fidei professione — colligatum, sub regimine legitimorum pastorum, ac præcipue unius Christi in terris Vicarii, Romani pontificis.* Tom. 2. c. 2.

† *Matth. xxiii. 10.*

‡ *Eph. i. 20, 22.*

fallible Spirit, to preach his Religion in the World, their Testimony is the Testimony of Christ, and to receive their Gospel and Doctrine, is to receive and submit to Christ himself, as Head and Legislator in the Church. *He that receiveth you, i.e. you my Apostles, receiveth me,* *says our blessed Lord. Hence the Converts at *Jerusalem*, who were the first Christian Church that was ever planted, are described as *continuing stedfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship.* †

Now as we have no full and certain Account of the Doctrines taught by Christ and his Apostles, but from the Records of the New Testament, and as these contain the whole Revelation of the Gospel, all that we are to believe and practise as Christians: 'Tis an undeniable Consequence, that we can no otherwise demonstrate our Subjection and Fidelity to Christ, as Lord and Law-giver in his Church, than by our care in acquainting ourselves with the Sacred Records of Truth, and religiously adhering to them as the only Rule and Standard of our Faith and Worship, as God shall enable us to understand them; in Opposition to the Claims of interested Men to interpret them for us, and to all traditional Doctrines and Practices enforced and recommended as of equal Authority with them. For to argue as the Papists do about the Church: Protestants and Papists agree, that the Scriptures are the infallible Word of God; but they do not both agree that Traditions are of equal Authority with the Word of God, or a sure Direction in all Matters relating to Conscience and eternal Salvation. And of Consequence it must be much safer to consult, and govern our Faith and Practice by that Rule, which is allowed on both Sides to be infallible and divine, than by that which on one Side is affirmed to be fallible, human, superstitious and erroneous.

* Matth. x. 40.

† Acts ii. 42.

But I need not such kind of Arguments as these. You are Christians, the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ; and his Authority, I know, you must allow to be sacred and conclusive. Hear then the Command of the Son of God. * *Search the Scriptures*, saith he to the Jews, *for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me*; and good Reason there was for this Command, because an inspired Apostle tells us, *All Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, and are able to make us wise unto salvation, thro' faith in Christ Jesus.* † The Letters of the several Apostles are almost all of them written to the Churches, and intended for their Perusal and Edification. And St. Paul expressly commands the *Thessalonians*, ‡ *Stand fast brethren, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or* OUR EPISTLE. And that none might be ignorant of the Contents of his Epistle, he tells the *Thessalonians*, § *I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the brethren.* And the *Colossians*, ** *When this epistle is read amongst you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.* So that the Writings of the New Testament were intended, fellow Christians, for your Perusal, and without being acquainted with them, you can never continue in that Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, the adhering to which is an essential Note of the Christian Church. I will only add further on this Head,

That as far as Men depart from this Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, so far they cease to be Members of the Church of Christ, and are to be marked and avoided by all the Faithful. Thus St.
Paul

* John v. 39.

§ 1 Theff. v. 27.

† 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.

** Col. iv. 16.

‡ 2 Theff. ii. 15.

Paul advises Timothy, These things teach and exhort. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness --- from such withdraw thyself. Yea, the Apostle goes yet farther, and pronounceth a severer Censure on those who perverted or altered the Doctrine and Gospel which he preached. There are, says he, some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But tho' we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed.† But thus much as to the first Scripture Mark of the Christian Church. I shall mention but one more, and that is*

2. The mutual and firm Union of those, who profess the Doctrines of Christ and his Apostles, in the Practice of universal Virtue, and especially, by the Exercise of fervent Charity and Love; since nothing is more evident, than that the Disciples of Christ are to be distinguished as much by the Holiness of their Lives, as the Purity of their Faith; and because the Love of the Brethren is made one of the distinguishing Marks of a true Christian by our Saviour himself. *A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know, that ye are my disciples, if ye have love to one another.‡*

'Tis, I confess, difficult to judge of inward Principles and Dispositions; and those who as to outward Appearance may profess the true Faith, and wear *the form of godliness*, may yet be some of them insincere in the Sight of God, and no genuine

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* 1 Eph. vi. 3--5, † Gal. i. 7, 8, 9, ‡ John xiii. 34, 35.

Members of the Church of Christ; and Men, who can judge only according to outward Appearances, may be deceived in the Judgment of Charity which they pass on them. However, we have one sure Rule to go by, and may certainly conclude who are not of the Church of Christ; *viz.* those who openly and avowedly pervert and corrupt the Simplicity of the Christian Faith, by teaching Doctrines absolutely subversive of the Nature and Design of it; and who habitually dishonour the Doctrine of Godliness, by the allowed Immoralities of a wicked life. Or if thou knowest, Christian, any Societies of Men calling themselves by the Christian Name, who have put off Bowels of Compassions, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering, Charity and Love; and who, instead of practising these Virtues, excommunicate and damn, malign and revile, and by Methods of Iniquity and Blood, torture and persecute and destroy others, for their Adherence to the original records of Christianity, and the Purity of the Christian Faith and Worship; thou may'st safely pronounce them to be cut off from Christ, to be of the Synagogue of Satan, and to be actuated by that Wisdom, which is *earthly, sensual, and devilish*, James iii. 14, 15.

Having thus considered the Notes which the Scriptures give us of the Church of Christ, I now proceed to consider those which are laid down by Popish Writers; tho' I think such an Enquiry is perfectly needless, considering the Account they give of the Church and the Members of it. For as Cardinal *Bellarmino* makes it a Mark of the Church that they submit to the *Roman* Pontiff, and expressly allows the most notorious Sinners and secret Infidels to be Members of it, so they profess to believe as the Church doth, and communicate in her Sacraments, what need we any Notes to discover the Church? The Church of *Rome* is well

well known, and the Nations that adhere to her Communion; and all the Cardinals Marks can't make her more *notorious* than she is already; and if the Church of Christ and the Church of *Rome* is the same thing, and this is to be taken for granted as a first Principle, 'tis as ridiculous to give Marks of the Church, as it would be of the City of *Rome* itself, or of any other well known City or Country in the World. But to pass by this, and other things of the like Nature, let us examine the Cardinal's Notes particularly.

N O T E I.

The first, according to the Cardinal, is, *the very name of the Catholick Church*.* But I think this is direct nonsense; because the Catholick Church is nothing but the Collection of all true Christians and particular Churches thro' the World. And therefore to answer any Person enquiring, which, amongst all who bear the Christian Name, is the true Church? I say to answer him, that it is that which hath the Name of Catholick, is either to say that the true Church is the Collection of all the true Churches in the World, which is to say nothing to the Purpose, because it is no Answer to the Question; or, that it is some particular Church that assumes the Name of Catholick to itself; which is to say worse than nothing, because 'tis to affirm that it is a *particular Universal*. And this Contradiction the Name of *Roman Catholick* really implies; because 'tis saying that the particular Church or Congregation of Persons called Christians in *Rome* is the universal Church, *i. e.* all the particular Churches of Christ throughout the World.

Besides, what can bare Names prove, which Men may take or refuse at pleasure, with Reason or without it? Hereticks themselves have, as the Cardinal

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allows,

* *Ipsum catholicæ ecclesiæ nomen.*

allows, assumed this Name ; and if the bare assuming of it proves any thing, they have as much a Right to it as the Papists.

Farther, there was a time when the Word Catholick could not belong to *Rome*, but did actually belong to the Converts of another City, *viz.* to those of *Jerusalem* ; because there were once no Christians but what were in that Place, the Gospel having been first published there ; and therefore the Word Catholick can be no Proof that the Church of *Rome* is the only true Church, because the Catholick Church existed before there was any Christian Church in *Rome* at all. Or if by Catholick Church be meant, a Church that holds that Doctrine which is common to all Christian Churches, then any Church which holds that Doctrine is as much the Catholick Church as the Church of *Rome*, and therefore the mere Name can be no distinguishing Mark of that Church.

N O T E II.

The Cardinal's second Note is *Antiquity*, because, as he says, *the true church is older than the false one, as God was before the devil.* But to this it may be answered, that bare Antiquity is no certain Evidence of Truth, because there are many Errors and Falshoods which can boast of Antiquity earlier than Christianity itself. Thus *Judaism*, which is now mere Superstition, was older than the Gospel, and Idolatry older than both.

And with respect to the Christian Church, we know that there were Errors in it even in the apostolick Age, which can never change their Nature, or be transformed into Truth, because of their Plea of Antiquity. For Instance: The worshipping of Angels was introduced during the Ministry of *St. Paul* himself, and yet it must be allow'd to be Superstition and Idolatry. For *St. Paul* himself expressly

expresly condemns it as such: *Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels, vainly puffed up in his fleshly mind, and not holding the head; ** and by Consequence the Church of Rome, which maintains and practises this old Angel Worship, doth not hold the Head, but hath cut herself off from the Unity of the Christian Church, notwithstanding the Antiquity of this Superstition.

However Antiquity may be allow'd to be in some Sense a Mark or Note of the Christian Church, *viz.* when any Society of Christians hold the true Faith of Christ and his Apostles, which was at first delivered to the Saints; and this is *Bellarmino's* sixth Note, *viz. an agreement in doctrine with the ancient church, or with that doctrine which the apostles delivered.* And as this Note is the same in the Main with the Second, I shall consider it here. Now as there is no way of Understanding the Apostles Doctrine so certainly as from their Writings, which are allowed even by our Adversaries to be the oldest Records of Christianity, this therefore is the only true Antiquity to which as Christians we are to Appeal. And we are content that the Controversy between us and the Papists shall be decided by this Ancient and Infallible Rule. But they, Conscious to themselves, that there is nothing in this Antiquity to favour their peculiar Doctrines and Practices, decline the Trial by this sacred Judge, and fly to Fathers, Councils and Traditions, all of them later than the Writers of the sacred Records, and will not suffer the Laity to read them, lest they should discern their gross Abuses and Corruptions of Christianity. However, to you my Brethren I appeal; and now call upon you to judge in the Fear of God, on which Side genuine Antiquity lies. As Protestants then,

1. We

1. We renounce all dependance on the Pope of *Rome*, and acknowledge one Lord, one Law-giver in the Christian Church, *viz.* the Lord Jesus Christ; and the Reason is, not only because there is not one Word about the Pope and his Headship in the New Testament, but because Christ himself says, *One is your master even Christ*; * and because St. Paul says, *There is but one Lord, and one faith*; and that *the whole family in heaven and earth is named of the Lord Jesus Christ*. †

2. As Protestants we affirm that Saints and Angels are not Mediators in Heaven for us, and that Christ Jesus is our sole Mediator and Advocate. And here we have Apostolick Antiquity to support us. For St. Paul expressly says, that *there is but one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus*. ‡

3. As Protestants we affirm that Angels and Saints have no claim to Veneration and Worship. Here St. Paul is on our Side, who condemns it as Superstition and Will-worship, in the Place before cited; and one greater than St. Paul, even Christ himself, whose Doctrine it is, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*. ** Add to this, that Angels themselves have condemned this Worship. Thus when St. John fell down to Worship before the Angel's Feet, the Angel said to him, *See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant. Worship God*. ††

4. As Protestants we affirm, that in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper there remains Bread and Wine after the Consecration, and that they are not transubstantiated into the Body and Blood of Christ. Here also, besides the Impiety, Absurdity, and Contradiction of the doctrine of Transubstantiation, genuine Antiquity is evidently on our Side. For St. Paul expressly calls that which we
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* Eph. iv. 5.

† iii. 15.

‡ 1 Tim. ii. 5.

** Matth. iv. 10.

†† Rev. xxii. 9.

actually Eat and Drink in the Sacrament, Bread and Wine. *As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.* *

5. As Protestants we affirm that Christians have an equal Right to the Wine as to the Bread in the Eucharist. For thus says St. Paul to the *Corinthians*, *As often as ye eat this bread, & drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.* †

6. As Protestants we affirm that the Eucharist is only a Memorial of Christ's Death, and not a propitiatory Sacrifice either for the living or dead. Let Christ and his Apostle determine. *Do this*, says Christ, *in remembrance of me.* ‡ And that all Christians were to receive the Elements with this View only, St. Paul assures the *Corinthians* ** from Christ himself. And the Author to the *Hebrews* tells us, that *by one offering Christ hath for ever perfected those who are sanctified*; and that because there is remission of sins under the new covenant, there is no more offering for sin. ††

7. As Protestants we renounce the Doctrine of Purgatory, and affirm that the future State is no State of Probation, but a State in which Men are unalterably determined for Happiness or Misery. And here we have Scripture Antiquity clearly on our Side. Thus the wise Man, speaking of Death, says, *Then the Dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it*, ‡‡ without any Intimation of stopping at Purgatory by the Way. And St. Paul affirms, that at the Judgment-Seat of Christ every one shall receive the Things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad; § the necessary Consequence of which is, that there can be no Purgatory antecedent to the general Judgment to cleanse away Men's Guilt;

* 1 Cor. xi. 26.

† Ibid.

‡ Luke xxii. 19.

** 1 Cor. xi. 24.

‡‡ Heb. x. 14 — 18.

‡‡ Eccles. xii. 7.

§ 2 Cor. v. 10.

Guilt; for then they could not receive at the Judgment according to the Deeds done in their Bodies.

8. As Protestants we affirm, that the Worship of God ought to be performed in a Language which all Men understand. And here we have not only the plain Reason of the Thing with us, but apostolick Antiquity too. For St. Paul tells the *Corinthians*, *If I speak with tongues*, i. e. in such a Language as those I speak to can't understand, *what shall I profit you?* And hereupon he gives this Command: *Let all things be done to edifying.* *

And finally, as Protestants we affirm that all Christians have a Right to search the Scriptures, and make the best Use of them that they can. And here also we have the Authority of Christ, *Search the scripture.* And of St. Paul, *Let the word of Christ dwell richly in you in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs.* † Which Command would be impossible, if they had not the Word of Christ, and the Scriptures of Truth to read and consult for themselves.

Now if these Protestant Doctrines are as old as Christ and his Apostles, and were taught by them, as we see plainly they were, it is evident that as Protestants we have the Sanction of the most venerable Antiquity on our Side, and this Note of the true Church of Christ belonging to us, in its fullest Perfection. When therefore the Papists scornfully cry out, and ask us: *Where was your Church before Luther and Calvin?* The Answer is obvious: That the Doctrine of our Church was in the Writings of the inspired Apostles, where theirs is never to be found; 'twas the same as was taught by Christ himself, whom they have forsaken, and whose Faith they have corrupted. And as to the Professors of our Doctrines, they were to be found amongst those

Martyrs

* 1 Cor. xiii. 6—26.

† Col. iii. 16.

Martyrs and Confessors, whose Blood their Church hath cruelly spilt ; who had from their Bishops, and Clergy, and Monks, like the antient Worthies, *the trial of cruel mockings and scourgings and bonds and imprisonment, who were stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword, wandering about, thro' their Perfidiousness and Cruelty, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented, of whom the world was not worthy, wandering in desarts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*

We willingly acknowledge these were our Predecessors, even these persecuted Disciples of the crucified Jesus, who protested against the Abominations of their Church, and were put to Death by them for the Testimony of Jesus.

But now what genuine Antiquity have the Papists to boast of in Vindication of their Doctrine and Worship ? I confess that they have Antiquity for many Things older than the Religion of Christ and his Apostles : They have all the idolatrous Nations of the Earth, and the false Prophets and Deceivers amongst the *Jews*, wholly on their Side, by whose Authority and Examples they may (if they please) vindicate their own Idolatries : They have the *Egyptian* men-eaters, *Antiochus Epiphanes*, *Nero*, *Domitian*, and other Monsters of Mankind, who went before them in the Measures of Persecution, Cruelty and Blood : Yea, they have the Example of one more antient than all of these, that we will allow them to glory in, even his, who as our blessed Saviour tells us, * *was a Murderer from the beginning.*

Other genuine Antiquity they have none to plead. Many of their Doctrines were unknown to, or abhorred by the primitive Church, and are mere Novelties and Innovations, that were originally introduced by Superstition, and then maintained by cruelty and Blood.

The

The Supremacy of the Pope, and his Title of Universal Bishop, was first confirmed by a Murderer, even by *Phocas* to Pope *Boniface III*, who persuaded *Phocas* to ordain, that the Church of *Rome* should be the Head of all Churches, and that the Bishop of it should be called, *Oecumenical* or *Universal Bishop*. This was above 600 Years after Christ. And tho' *Bellarmino* denies that this Title was then first given the Pope, yet nothing is more evident than that the Popes before this did not assume it as a Title belonging to their See. For *Gregory* the Great, who was the immediate Predecessor of *Boniface* except one in the See of *Rome*; rejected this Title of Universal Bishop with Abhorrence, and tells *Mauritius* the Emperor in a Letter to him, * that it was † a blasphemous title, and that no one of the Roman Pontiffs ever assumed so singular a one. And in his Letter to *John*, Bishop of *Constantinople*, ‡ he says to him: *What wilt thou say to Christ, the head of the universal church, in the day of judgment, who thus endeavourest to subject his members to thyself by this title of Universal? Who, I ask thee, dost thou imitate in this but the Devil?* And in his Letter to *Constantina* the Empress, § he says, *His pride in assuming this title shew'd the times of antichrist were at hand.*

Again, the Intercession of Saints and Angels is a Doctrine of which there is not the least Intimation in the Writings of the two first Centuries, and therefore it wants the Note of genuine Antiquity; though it must be allowed to have been introduced in

* L. 4. Ind. 13. P. 137.

† Absit à cordibus Christianorum nomen illud blasphemiae, in quo omnium sacerdotum honor adimitur, dum ab uno sibi dementer arrogatur. Certe pro Beati Petri, Apostolorum principis, honore, per venerandam Chalcedonensem Synodum, Romano Pontifici oblatum est. Sed nullus eorum unquam hoc singularitatis nomen assumpsit.

‡ Id. Ibid. Epist. 38.

§ Ep. 34.

in the very next Century following: *Origen* and *Cyprian* expressly favouring this Superstition.

As to the Worship of Saints and Angels, this is still of a much later date, especially as a standing generally received Doctrine of the Church. For though *Athanasius* was for worshipping Saints, yet *Cyril* who lived in the next Century says, * *We neither call the holy martyrs Gods, nor are we used to worship them.* *St. Austin* affirms, *that neither Saints nor Angels will be worshipped.* And even as low down as *Gregory*, in the 7th Century, he tells us, † *that Angels refused to be worshipped since the appearance of Christ.*

As to the Worship of Images, though Superstition had brought them in in the third Century, and though as *Platina* tells us, they were in the Church of *Rome* in the fourth, yet Pope *Gregory* before-mentioned, expressly condemns the Worship of them, in his Letter to *Serenus* Bishop of *Marseilles*. ‡ Yea in the 8th Century the Worship of Images was condemned by a Council at *Constantinople* in the Year 755, consisting of 338 Bishops. Nor was it till above 30 Years after this, that this Idolatry was established in the Christian Church by the second Council of *Nice* in the Year 788, by the Intrigues of the Legats of *Rome*, and under the Influence of *Irene* the Empress.

As to the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, it doth not appear to have been so much as broached till the 8th Century, when it was so far from being received as the Doctrine of the Church, that it was warmly opposed by the most learned Men of that Age, and censured as an Innovation. The Name itself was no older than the twelfth Century, nor the Doctrine ever decreed or established by any general Council, till the Council of *Trent* in the Year 1551.

And

* Cont. Jul. p. 203. Ed. Spanhem.

† T. 3. p. 20.

‡ T. 3. l. 7. Ep. 111.

And as the Sacrifice of the Mass depends on that of Transubstantiation, it must be as novel a Doctrine as that; nor is any Thing more certain than that the best Writers for many Centuries make the Death of Christ on the Cross, the only propitiatory Sacrifice for Sin.

As to the Communion in one Kind only for the Laity, this was never introduced till the twelfth Century; and the Council of *Constance*, * though they decree the Communion for the Laity to be received only in the Species of Bread, yet in this Decree they own, that Christ instituted the Sacrament in both Kinds, and that in the primitive Church this Sacrament was received in both Kinds by Believers; thus impudently did they obtrude their own Decree on the World, in Opposition to the acknowledged Appointment of Christ, and the Practice of the primitive Church. And yet the Papists have the Face to boast of Antiquity!

As to Purgatory, there is not the least Mention of it in the two first Centuries, and the Notion was first introduced by *Origen* in the third, or rather towards the Beginning of the fourth; though *Belarmine* himself acknowledges, † that *Origen's* Purgatory was very different from that of the Popish Church, and derived from the *Platonick* Philosophy. And therefore as *Origen's* Purgatory is too late an Invention to have the Sanction of true Antiquity, much more is the Popish Purgatory too late, which though it takes its Rise from *Origen's* is quite different from it.

As to the Worship of God in an unknown Language, this is not only condemned in the most express Manner by *St. Paul*, as hath been before observed, but is contrary to the Practice of the Eastern and Western Churches, for many hundred Years; when the *Latin* and *Greek* were as much vulgar or common Languages, as any modern Languages whatsoever. Pope *John VIII.* in the 9th Century,

* L'Enf. Vol. I. p. 386. † T. 2. l. 1. c. 2. though

* though he at first censured the *Slavonians* for celebrating Mass in their own Tongue, and commanded them to do so no more, yet upon better Information he wrote to their King a Letter, in which he tells him, that it was not contrary to Faith and sound Doctrine to say Mass and Prayers in their own Tongue, and therefore permitted the Gospel to be read and Prayers said in the *Slavonian* Language. Nor was it till 200 Years after, that Pope *Gregory VII.* forbid the Celebration of divine Offices in this Way, commanding the Prince of that Nation to oppose the People herein with all his Forces; which gave Occasion to numberless Cruelties and Slaughters.

And finally as to the Use of the Scriptures; that they were universally allowed to Christians for their Perusal, is evident from their being translated into so many Languages, and from the most express Testimony of the best Writers, during the first twelve hundred Years and more after Christ. Nor could there be any other End of prohibiting them, than to retain the People in profound Ignorance, and keep them in a quiet Subjection to the irrational, unscriptural and antichristian Inventions and Superstitions of the Priests.

By this Account you see that there is no Comparison between the Antiquity of the Protestant and Popish Doctrines; and that the true genuine Antiquity is on our Side; and that their distinguishing Tenets and Practices are mere Novelties and Innovations that have neither the Testimony of Scripture, nor the primitive Writers of Christianity to defend and support them.

N O T E III.

The Cardinal's third Note is, *a perpetual and uninterrupted Duration.* But this is no distinguishing Note of the true Church, because Idolatry and Paganism

* Coun. of *Trent*, p. 587.

ganism may lay a better Claim to this Note than the Church of *Rome*, which seems to have began from the first Ages after the Flood, and continues to this very Day amongst many Nations of the World.

Besides, as the Cardinal allows in his sixth Note, that consent in Doctrine with the antient apostolick Church is another Note of the Church, it follows that where this Doctrine is departed from, there can be no true Church of Christ, even though there may remain the Christian Name, and some external Profession of Christianity. And as it hath been shewn that the Church of *Rome* is scandalously departed from the apostolick Doctrine, she wants the best Note that can be given of her being the Church of Christ.

And tho' there is Reason to think that there will always be a true Church of Christ on Earth, yet this doth not depend on any particular Churches uninterrupted Duration: For particular Churches may grow corrupt and utterly cease, as was the Case of the Seven Churches in *Asia*, mentioned in the Revelations, and yet the true Faith and Church be still preserved amongst others. And, of Consequence, the continued Duration of the Church of *Rome*, as a Body of Men calling themselves by the Christian Name, is no Proof that the Faith of Christ is not perverted and corrupted by her, nor of Consequence that she is the true Church.

N O T E IV.

The next Note is *the Amplitude of the Church, or the Multitude and Variety of Believers in it*; because the catholick Church, as the Cardinal observes, must embrace all Nations, and Kinds of Men. But if this be a good Note, I am sure the Church of *Rome* can't be the true Church; because it is not catholick in this Respect, there being but few Nations in the World comparatively,
who

who embrace her Communion. The Pagans and Mahometans are vastly superior in Number to the Papists; and if the different Denominations of Christians, such as Protestants, Grecians, Armenians, and others that may be named, are added together, who renounce her Communion, the Multitude will be much larger than the Church of *Rome* can boast of.

Besides; if this be a distinguishing Mark of the true Church, it must be such a Mark as is inseparable from her. But this cannot with any Truth be asserted: For in our Saviour's Time 'twas but a *little flock*, as he expressly calls it; and for several Years it was almost wholly confined to the Jewish Nation; nor can it be made appear, that there ever was a Time when all Nations embraced the Christian Faith, much less the Faith of the Church of *Rome*.

The Truth is, the Number of Believers is a purely accidental Thing, and the spreading of the Gospel entirely dependent on the Disposals of Providence. Nations that have embraced the Gospel, have had it taken from them; witness the famous Churches of *Asia* and *Africa*, which are now no more, tho' they were formerly more numerous than all the Churches who are within the Pale of the Church of *Rome*: And others who now have it not, may, in God's good Time, be favoured with it; the Church, in the mean time, remaining the same, whether more or fewer Nations embrace her Faith, or enter into her Communion.

The Time hath been when Heresy itself could boast of Numbers, and *the World wondered to see itself become Arian*. But Papists will not allow that this is a conclusive Argument to prove that the *Arians* were the true Church of Christ.

N O T E V.

The next Note is, *the Succession of Bishops in the Roman Church from the Apostles to the present Day*;

a Note, which tho' of no Significancy, is insisted on by many who call themselves Protestants, as necessary to the Validity of all Sacraments and Administrations in the Church.

But to all such vain Pretences I answer, that the Terms of Salvation and Communion are fixed by God in the Gospel of Christ, and that a sincere Compliance with them will secure Men of the Blessings of Redemption, independent of any Succession of Bishops and Pastors from the Church of *Rome*, or any other Church whatsoever. The Circumstances of the Christian World, I am sure, must be very deplorable, if the Validity of all Administrations in the Church depended on so precarious a Foundation. For how shall Christians know and be assured that the Succession hath never been interrupted? Who will undertake to shew them the Chain whole and unbroken? A single Link missing, upon this Scheme, unchristians them at once, and leaves them to the uncovenanted Mercies of God. And can any Man of common Sense, or that hath any Notion of the moral Attributes of God, believe this to be the Gospel Scheme, or that God hath left Mankind to such a miserable State of Uncertainty? Is there one Word of this Absurdity in the sacred Records? or of the Necessity of such a successive Ordination to the Efficacy of God's Word, or securing the Benefits of Salvation? In vain hast thou shed thy precious Blood, O Jesus, thou Son of the eternal God, if there be no Virtue in thy Sacraments, unless administered by Men who can derive their Orders without Interruption from thy Apostles! Must the Efficacy of thy Sufferings depend on the precarious Claims of those who have no Records, no certain Facts to make them good? Hast thou made the Validity of thy Ministers Services to depend on the Orders they receive from the *Synagogue of Satan*?

That

That some of the Popes of *Rome* have been Monsters of Wickedness, and guilty of the most execrable Crimes, the Papists themselves allow. And were those Monsters the Bishops of Christ? Could there be no true Ministers, no Pastors of the Christian Church, without their receiving a Sanction from such impure Hands? Is it any Honour to Protestant Episcopacy, to derive all its Claims from those who were not only a Scandal to Christianity, but a Reproach to Men?

Besides; How shall we determine the Right when the Poppedom was divided, and there were two or three Popes together, anathematizing and damning each other? And yet every Christian must be sure from which of these Popes his Bishop hath derived his Orders; and, which is as difficult, that this Pope was the genuine Successor of the Apostles, if the Validity of all Administrations depend upon this regular boasted Succession.

I will venture to affirm that the Proof of this is an absolute Impossibility; and that if it could be proved, it would signify nothing, because the Church of Christ depends not on the Succession merely of any Order of Men, but on the Succession and Preservation of the Christian Doctrine. Could the Popes of *Rome* prove their regular Succession from the Apostles, yet if they have departed from the apostolick Faith, they are not Christian Bishops, and therefore their Ordinations are no more valid, than if they proceeded from an *Indian* Brachman, or a *Mahometan* Dervise. Not to add that the *Arians* heretofore boasted of this Succession, as doth the *Grecian* Church to this Day; who yet will never be allowed by the Church of *Rome* to be the true Church upon this Account.

The sixth Note I have already considered.

NOTE VII.

The Cardinal's seventh Note is, *the Union of the Members amongst themselves, and with the Head, because the Church is called one Body, one Spouse, and one Sheepfold*. But if by the Union of the Members amongst themselves, he means their being called by any other common Name than that of Christ, this Note is not good; *St. Paul* having given it as one Mark of Schism, to say, *I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, and I of Cephas*. And if he means by the Union of the Members with the Head, their Union with the Pope as universal Bishop, this can be no Note of the Church of Christ, because this Title did not belong to the Popes, and was not assumed by them, till above 600 Years after Christ, unless the Cardinal will affirm, there was no true Church till the Time of *Boniface III*.

Besides, the mere Union of Persons one with another, is no Note of Truth or Righteousness. The Psalmist complained in his Day, *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed*. And yet this Confederacy was no Proof that their Cause was good. In the Christian Church *Arians* have been as much united as the Catholics, Pagans have been as much united as Christians, and *Mahometans* are to this Day as much as either. But will this prove that Heresy is truth, that Idolatry is true Worship, or *Mahomet* upon a Level with the Son of God?

But supposing that Unity is a Note of the true Church, how will this prove the Church of *Rome* to be that Church? Are there no Differences then of Importance amongst the Members of her Communion? Supposing there is not, yet how have they maintained the Union they boast of? Why, by Violence, and the Terrors of the civil Power: By Massacres, Dragooning, and the cruel *Mercies* of an horrid Inquisition: Or else, by keeping their
People

People ignorant of the Word of God, that they may not have Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, and Hearts to understand, that they might be converted and saved. And is an Union, promoted by such antichristian Methods, a Note of the true Christian Church?

But how vain is this Pretence to Unity amongst the Members of the Church of *Rome*. Even those they call Heads of their Church, have differed from each other. * *Stephen VI.* abrogated the Decrees of Pope *Formosius* his Predecessor, drew his Body out of his Sepulchre, cut off his Fingers which he used in Ordination, and threw them into the *Tiber*; alledging as a Reason, that he obtained the Popedom by Perjury. *Romanus* the next Pope, abrogated all the Decrees of his Predecessor *Stephen*; and as *Platina* observes, this Quarrel had such bad Influence, that every following Pope infringed, or wholly abrogated the Acts of the Foregoing.

But this is but a small Matter. The Christian Church was divided for near forty Years together, by the Factions of the Anti-Popes, there being sometimes two, sometimes three together, each of them asserting that he was the only lawful Pope, and anathematizing the other, and putting the Princes and People who would not acknowledge them, under an Interdict.

And as the Heads of their Church have been thus divided, so also have the Members of it too, and indeed are to this Day. Thus the Jesuits and Jansenists are as much divided as any Protestants about Predestination and the like Articles; the *Dominicans* and *Franciscans* about the immaculate Conception of the Virgin *Mary*. Others of them differ about the Infallibility of the Pope: Others whether the supreme Power resides in a General Council or the Pope; the Synod of *Constance* determining

* *Platina*.

termining for the Council, that of *Trent* for the Pope: Others finally, about the Obligation of the Pope's Constitution *Unigenitus*, and the Truth of the Doctrines contained in it.

And these Differences amongst the Papists are some of them of the highest Importance in their Scheme, and relate to the Foundations of the Church, and therefore of much greater Consequence than any amongst consistent Protestants, who all of them agree in one common infallible Head of the Church, and in one fixed unalterable Rule of Faith and Worship.

N O T E VIII.

The eighth Note, and the only one which I shall further mention, is, *Sanctity of Doctrine; and the Church*, as *Bellarmino* observes, *is called holy, because its Profession is holy, containing nothing false as to Doctrine, nothing impure as to Morals*. As to this Note I would observe, that any Person, or particular Churches assuming the Name of holy, doth not prove that it is actually so. For thus the *Jews* amidst their most abominable Corruptions, said to others, *Stand by, for I am holier than thou*; * who yet were an offensive Smoak before God: Nor doth it follow, that because the true Church of Christ, in all Ages and Nations, hath a just Title to the Character of holy, that therefore the Church of *Rome*, or any other particular Church, is an holy Church; because particular Churches may depart from the Purity of the Christian Profession: And that this is really the Case with the Church of *Rome*, may be made evident by almost innumerable Particulars. Give me leave to mention a few out of many.

The Doctrine of the Pope's Supremacy, and of his Plenitude of Power, and of his being the
visible

* *Isaiah lxx. 5.*

visible Head of the Church, is not a Doctrine of Godliness but Gain, and hath been actually abused to the most enormous Immoralities. 'Tis in itself an impious Invasion of the Prerogative and legislative Power of Christ, who is the sole Head of the Church, and hath never appointed any visible Head or substitute, under him. Under this pretence, Popes have been guilty of the most execrable Wickednesses: They have absolved Men from the Obligations of the most sacred Oaths, broken the publick Faith, excited Subjects to Rebellion against their Princes, warranted private Assassinations and secret Murders, sanctified unnatural Conspiracies, and publick Massacres; dissolved matrimonial Contracts, and justified adulterous and incestuous Marriages, and granted Absolution to the most notorious and abominable Sinners. I have indisputable Facts for all these Things, which even Papists themselves cannot deny.

Again, the Intercession of Saints and Angels, and the Adoration they pay to them, and the Veneration they give to Images, Wafers, Pictures, Relicks, and the like Things, is a defiling the Temple of God with Idols, and in some respects as fordid an Idolatry as ever was practised by the Heathens; who indeed some of them worshipped Animals to us detestable, but to them useful and beneficial. Whereas Papists bow down to dead Bodies, and even the smallest Bones or Fragments of those bodies; which had they but touched under the *Jewish* Dispensation, they must have remained *unclean seven days*. * Yea the Law was yet severer: *Whosoever toucheth a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. And the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from the congregation.* And yet have I my self seen, the Bone of a dead Man enshrined in Silver, solemnly placed on the pretended

* Numb. xix. 16, 20.

pretended Altar of God, sprinkled with Incense, receiving Adoration from a purpled Priest, elevated to the People, presented to an high-born Imperial Princess, and reverently and devoutly saluted by her on her Knees, as if her Saviour had been present, and come in Person to demand her Subjection and Homage. Good God! Is this Idolatry, this Worship to a Bone, the Religion of Jesus? Is this the purity of the Faith and Worship of Rome? *O my soul come not thou into her secret, unto her assembly mine honour be not thou united.*

Again, what is there in their Doctrine of Transubstantiation but a Mixture of Absurdity, Contradiction and Blasphemy? The Priest he pretends to turn his Bread into his Saviour's Body and Blood and Soul and Divinity, Presently he adores him, and holds him up to the People for Adoration. Then he immediately devours him, digests him, and at last casts him out as an unclean Thing, modestly forbids me to mention where.

How evidently are the Doctrines of Purgatory, private Masses, auricular Confession, priestly Absolution, Penances and Satisfactions, venial Sins, and the like Falshoods, all calculated to promote the Practice of Sin, and render Men easy in the Commission of it? But it would be an almost endless Task, to run thro' all these and other Doctrines of Popery, and shew you how they are calculated for the Church's Gain, and to defeat the great design of the Gospel Revelation, which is to prepare Men, by the Practice of Universal Holiness and Virtue, for the Reward of eternal Life. And yet the good Cardinal assures the World, that his Catholick Church maintains no Error, no Turpitude, and teaches nothing contrary to Reason, tho' it doth many Things above it. But thanks be to God, we know their Errors, and detest their Abominations, and are as sure that they have corrupted the simplicity of the Christian Faith, and the purity of the Gospel

Gospel Worship, as we are that the Scriptures are the infallible Word of God. And therefore let me, as an inference from the whole,

Exhort you to beware of all Approaches to the Communion of the Church of *Rome*; for if she is fairly and impartially tried by some of her own Notes, she must be condemned as a false and anti-christian Church. I know very well, that there are amongst us Men who allow her to be a true, tho' corrupted Church, and who derive their own Succession of Bishops from those of her Communion, and think that the validity of their own Sacraments and Orders depends on her preserving that Succession entire; and who farther freely allow that Men may be saved within the pale of the *Romish* Church, according to the Terms of the Gospel Covenant.

And I own that these and such like Concessions may be very necessary to the support of some certain Schemes, Pretences and Claims. But I am very certain it is doing no Credit, nor bringing any Security to the Protestant Cause; especially as those who make these Allowances, to the Church of *Rome*, condemn all who dissent from themselves, as guilty of Schism, and all their Sacraments and Administrations as null and void.

But let us take heed, Fellow Protestants, of such large and fatal Concessions as these; which those of the *Romish* Church actually employ to inveigle and deceive Men into their Communion. They tell them, that Protestants themselves allow their Church to be a True One, and that Persons may be saved in and by their Communion. And if this be so, What effectual Reason can be urged to prevail with Men to forsake it, or hinder others from embracing it?

But I think nothing is more evident, than that the Church of *Rome* cannot be, in any Sense, the true Church of Christ, because she hath forsaken both the Doctrines and Worship of that Church. Her Doctrine is impure, and her Worship Idolatrous.

trous. The Gospel she believes and preaches is a quite different one from what was taught by Christ and his Apostles, and she hath made void the Commandments of God by her Traditions. She teaches, forgive the Expression, 'tis not mine, but St. Paul's, **doctrines of devils, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving.* Her coming hath been *after the working of Satan with power, signs, and lying wonders, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they receive not the love of the truth that they may be saved.* She leads Men to other Saviours and Mediators besides the only one which God hath appointed, even Jesus Christ, and boasts of another fund of Merits for Sinners to depend on, besides those of the crucified Redeemer. She hath absolutely altered the Terms of Christian Communion and Salvation, and teaches Men how to commute with Almighty God, and compound for the grossest Immoralities of a wicked Life. She hath uncharitably excommunicated all who have protested against her Corruptions, and is therefore a Schismatical as well as an Apostate Church. She hath altered the Institutions of Christ, in opposition to what she owned to be his Will, and the Practice of the Primitive Church, and is therefore *self-condemned*, and guilty of Heresy as well as Schism.

Now is it possible that that Church, that idolatrous, heretical, and schismatical Church can be the true Church of Christ; or if we allow her to be a branch of Christ's Church, is she not a branch that beareth no good Fruit, or rather, a corrupted, withered, dead branch of the true Vine? Or, to use *Bellarmino's* Comparison, can she be considered in any other Relation to the true Church, than as *the hairs, or nails, or evil humours in a human body, i. e.* such things as Men cut off and purge out from their Bodies, to preserve the Decency and Life

of

of them? How then can that part of the Church, which hath no vital Principle herself, give Life to her Members? How can they be saved by the Communion of that Church, which hath no more relation to the true Church of Christ, than the dead Branches have to the Vine, or our very Excrescences to the human Body.

Were there any of the Members of that Church here present, I would beseech you by the Mercies of God, and the love of Jesus, and the Compassion due to your own Souls, that you would consider what Danger you are in, by believing the Errors, and conforming to the Practices she enjoins. Can any of you imagine that a Man can make his God, and a Priest turn a Wafer into his Saviour? Can you eat your Saviour and God at a Morsel without trembling? Can you trust to the Mediation of Saints and Angels, in defiance to the plain Doctrine of an inspired Apostle, affirming that there is but *one Mediator between God and man, even the man Christ Jesus*? Will you dare to worship Pictures of the invisible God; when God himself tells you, you shall neither *make images, nor bow down to them and serve them*? Will you venture to venerate and worship the dead Bodies and Bones even of Saints, who were they living, would reject such Adoration with Abhorrence? Is not this barefaced Idolatry, thus to give Adoration, though of an Inferior Kind, to mere Idols, without any Warrant from God, yea in direct Opposition to his most express Order to the contrary? And can these idolatrous Practices be vindicated by any other Arguments, than those which the Pagans of old used in Vindication of their Superstitions and Idolatries?

At least, let me prevail on such, if any there be here, to make a fair Examination, and to try these Doctrines and Practices by what your own Priests being Judges, is the infallible Word of God. As Protestants we desire not to be believed for our own Word.

Word. We appeal to the most authentick Antiquity and Authority. And we would have you appeal to, and judge by the same; and if your Priests and Confessors refuse you this Liberty, doth it not look like suspecting their own Cause? Must it not be because they dare not trust the Decision to that sacred and impartial Judge? I know they will tell you, that the Scriptures are hard to be understood. Ask them then, why they appeal to Scripture for the truth of some of their own Doctrines, and whether there be no Passages of Scripture plain, but just those which they quote? If they tell you, 'tis dangerous to read the Scripture, ask them, why then did Christ command us, *Search the scriptures*? Did the Saviour of Mankind give this Command only to ensnare Men into dangerous Errors? Or is this the only Infallibility of the Word of God, that it will infallibly lead those who honestly read it into damnable Mistakes? 'Tis Impiety to assert it, and Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of God, under whose Inspiration it was originally written.

How God will deal with those who, in the *Romish* Church, are invincibly ignorant of the Christian Faith, and destitute of the Word of Salvation to enlighten them, I will not pretend to determine. I am far from absolutely excluding them from all Share in his tender Mercies. However, sure I am that Popery is not the Religion of Christ, and that Idolatry is represented in Scripture as one of those Crimes for which *the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience*. And therefore tho' there may be a Possibility of their escaping eternal Condemnation in that Church, it cannot be as Members of it, nor according to the settled Conditions of the Gospel Salvation; and we must, I think, leave them in the same State as *Jews, Mahometans, and Pagans*, to the uncovenanted Mercies of God, and to the Disposals of his infinite Wisdom, who will deal with all Men according to Equity and Truth,
and

and accept every one in every nation, who fears him, and worketh righteousness. This possibly may in some Men's Judgment be counted Uncharitableness. But I would fain know, whether the Worship of an Image, a Picture, a Crucifix, a dead Body, or an old Bone, be not as stupid Idolatry, and as flat a Contradiction to the Gospel Religion, and as expressly condemned by it, as the Idolatries of Paganism? Will any then vindicate Christians in these Idolatries, and condemn the Pagans? Or allow Salvation to the one, and exclude the other from it? This is judging deceitfully and partially, and is a very inconsistent Conduct. Either let them fairly acknowledge, that Idolatry is no deadly Crime, nor declared inconsistent with the Terms of the Christian Covenant, or let them equally censure it wherever they find it.

But as to those who have been bred up in the Protestant Religion, and have the Liberty of consulting the Oracles of Truth, for such to embrace the Errors and Idolatries of the antichristian Church of Rome; what Excuse can be made for their Madness? With what Plea can they vindicate so shameful an Apostacy? Do not they willingly exchange Truth for Error, and the Worship of God for an impure Superstition? Can the Traditions of Men be a surer Guide than the Oracles of the God of Truth? Or can any one think himself safer in a Church, whose Faith and Worship stand upon human Decisions, than in those which are built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets? Can that Church direct us to a better and nearer Way to Heaven, than the Saviour himself? If not, *Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God will remember her iniquities.*

But I believe I am speaking to few comparatively, who have thus *made shipwreck of their faith and a good conscience.* Protestant Dissenters are too jealous of
their

their Liberties, ever to be brought to sacrifice them to the proud Claims of ambitious Priests, and too well established in the Grounds of the Protestant Religion, ever to exchange it for the Fopperies and Deceits of *Rome*. You are acknowledged even by her Missionaries *to be immoveable*, and they reap their Harvest from another Field.

Go on, beloved in the Lord, and hold your Steadfastness to the End. Know your Principles, and continue consistent Protestants. Let the Spirit of Popery, where-ever you discern it, be your Abhorrence. Maintain the Liberty of your own Consciences, and allow to every one the Rights of private Judgment. Authority and blind Submission are the Foundation and very Essence of Popery, and the two grand Causes to which all its Superstitions and Abuses are owing; and whoever they are, that plead for this Authority over the Consciences of others, and inculcate a blind Submission to the Priest as the Duty of the Christian People, they are, whatever Disguises they may wear, Enemies to the Protestant Religion and Liberties, and avow the most dangerous and pernicious Principle of all Popery.

Take heed farther of every Thing that may give Advantage to the common Enemy; and particularly of favouring the Principles of Infidelity, and of that Indifferency in Religion, which exposes Men to be practised upon by cunning Deceivers, and is indeed a Scandal and a Reproach to the Protestant Name and Cause. The abusing Liberty to Licentiousness naturally prepares the Way for Slavery; and when Persons are indifferent to all Religions, they will when Danger threatens them, Interest invites them, or delusive Appearances draw them, be ready to receive any. And it will be a plausible Argument in the Mouths of Popish Priests and Missionaries to seduce others to their corrupt Communion: See the Effects of this boasted Liberty amongst Protestants! The same Men who have rejected our Communion,
have

have thrown off their Christianity too ! They have renounced our Religion, and are grown indifferent to all ! And though this Kind of arguing from Men to Principles is fallacious and inconclusive, yet it hath a Tendency to make unfavourable Impressions of the Protestant Cause, on the Minds of the generality, who will much easier be persuaded to embrace a false Religion, than to have none at all.

I therefore beseech you, by all that is valuable to you as Christians and Protestants, that you endeavour to adorn the Doctrine of God your Saviour, by being exemplary in the Practice of every Virtue, especially *with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.* Let us beware of a censorious, dividing, and uncharitable Temper. 'Tis inconsistent with the fundamental Principle of Protestantism, the Liberty of private Judgment, and with the genuine Spirit of Christianity, which inculcates the most extensive Benevolence. Differences of Opinion there are in the Church of *Rome*, and Differences there will be in all Churches to the End of Time. But whilst we adhere to one Rule, and interpret that Rule as God enables us to understand it, should our Differences in lesser Matters divide our Hearts, or destroy that brotherly Affection, which ought to unite us under our different Apprehensions ? 'Tis one Note that the Church of *Rome* can be no true Church, because she hath no Charity ; and curses, anathematizes and damns all who will not submit to her Usurpations. Oh that the same fatal Spirit had never enter'd into the Churches of the Reformation, to disturb their Peace, to distress their Friends, and give their Enemies an Occasion of Triumph ! Were Protestants like the primitive Christians of *one heart and spirit*, did they like them stedfastly continue in the Apostles Doctrine, and were they but careful more generally to practise the Virtues of the Chri-

stian Life, the Protestant Religion could not fail to triumph over all the Cheats and Impostures of *Rome*, and the most subtle Attempts of her Missionaries to corrupt and enslave us would be absolutely ineffectual.

Finally, if, as we have been informed, Popery is advancing with large Strides into the Nation, and numerous Converts are brought into the Communion of the Church of *Rome*, why should not those who are firm Friends to the Protestant Religion use some of the self-same Methods to prevent the Growth of Popery, which Jesuits and others use to propagate it. I am well assured, that if the Missionaries who are now amongst us make any Harvest, 'tis amongst the lower and poorer Part of the Nation. And to what is this Success amongst them owing? To their Poverty and Ignorance, cunningly applied to, by Liberality on the one Hand, and Books of Instruction and Devotion (as they are called) on the other. Their Necessities are often relieved by the Charity of the Popish Nobility and Gentry; they have Coals provided for them, to support them under the Severities of the Winter; they have Persons to apply to under their Illnesses, and Remedies freely given them, to heal their Diseases: And being subdued by the Kindness of those who thus minister to them in their Necessities. How can they think ill of a Religion that thus prompts Men to Acts of Goodness? Especially when artful Books are put into their Hands, in which the Sound of Scripture itself is abused, in Defence of Doctrines that are a Contradiction to the genuine Sense of it.

And may we not here learn Policy from our Enemies? *Fas est & ab hoste doceri*. What should hinder you from being as generous as they? If the Poor are most in danger, 'tis every good Man's Duty to endeavour to prevent their being corrupted. God hath blessed many of you with plentiful Fortunes,
and

and how can you better employ them than in the Support of Liberty and true Religion? Your own Plenty should render you compassionate to the Wants of the Poor. And if those of you who are able, would in the several Neighbourhoods where you live, consult the Necessities of the Indigent, by helping them under the Rigours of Winter, and directing some prudent and careful Persons to make suitable Application to them, under their bodily Disorders; I am persuaded such Methods would have their desired Success, and the Progress of Popery be effectually prevented; especially if Bibles, and some small Books of Devotion, and others containing the Grounds of Religion in general, and those of the Protestant Religion in particular, were seasonably distributed amongst them: As to which latter Article, I beg Leave to say, that if the Gentlemen in the Dissenting Interest are but willing to encourage such a Charity, your Ministers will be glad, many, I believe all of them, not only to draw up such Books as may be proper, but to put them into such Hands as may most need them.

I have done, when I have only added, that if Popery be really increasing, and if even the* Prelates of the Establishment are sensible of it; methinks they should be sensible of the Necessity of a stronger Union amongst all Protestants, and rendered willing by the Sense of their own Danger, to take away every Occasion that may divide or discontent them. We are indeed publickly told, † *that any Contention to shew Favour to Dissenters, whilst the Nation is alarmed at the Growth of Popery, must be a Weakness in those Dissenters who promote it, and perhaps be the only sure Means to prevent Favour from being extended to them in any future Time.* I pretend not to direct those worthy Gentlemen who are in the Direction of our Affairs, how or when to act: May the God

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of

* Bishop of London's Letter.

† Courant of January 10.

of Wisdom direct them. But as a Minister of the Gospel I will venture to affirm, that no Time can be improper to rescue the Ordinances of Christ from an abandoned Prostitution; and as a Lover of Liberty I beg leave to say, that every Time is improper to lay Hardships upon faithful Subjects, or continue them when laid: As a Protestant, I think there can be no lasting Security against the Tyranny of Popery, unless we thoroughly renounce all the Principles of it, and never oppress Men in any Instance for their Religion and their Conscience; and if the Danger of its Increase be really such as is apprehended, I think all who value the Protestant Cause, must be ready to do Justice to their Protestant Brethren, and thus render them entirely easy: But if this very Alarm is made the Reason of refusing them this Justice, thoughtful Men will be too ready to suspect, that 'tis only a political Fetch, to keep those silent, who have so long had Reason to complain, and to prevent their Application for the Recovery of those Rights which they have so justly deserved, by their Readiness to save even the Established Church in the Time of her Danger, and by a long and uninterrupted Zeal for the Family and Person of his present Majesty, for whose Prosperity we daily pray, and to whose Government we wish increasing Honour and Success.

P O S T-

P O S T S C R I P T.

I FIND the last Paragraph of this Sermon hath given great Offence, and been represented as a Design to expose and ridicule the Lecture itself. Suspicion imagines every thing, and Ill-nature will say any thing, and 'tis almost impossible to guard against either. I have been myself fully convinced that Popery is gaining Ground amongst us, and I therefore engaged in the Lecture, with no View to act a treacherous Part in it, as hath been cruelly reported of me, but to do all I could, with the rest of my Brethren, to guard others against the Insinuations of Popish Missionaries, to pervert them to their antichristian Practices and Doctrines.

Nevertheless, as the Bishop of *London*, in his circular Letter to the Clergy, tells them, that the Increase of Popery is not so great as hath been apprehended; and yet as the Author of the *Courant*, referred to, urges this Increase as a Reason why the Protestant Dissenters should make no Application for the Redress of their Grievances, and insolently threatens them if they do: I must have the Liberty to say it again, that thoughtful Men will apprehend, that the Alarm of the Growth of Popery, just at this Juncture, to which the Dissenters have been advised and encouraged to refer their Hopes of Relief, by the Gentlemen who have had the Management of their Affairs, as well as others, is made use of as a *political Fetch* to silence and disappoint them; if an Occasion be ta-

P O S T S C R I P T.

ken from hence to refuse them the Liberty of applying, or render ineffectual such an Application if made. The *Courant* before mentioned gave rise to the Passage complained of; and tho' the Observation I drew from it may be displeasing to some, surely it cannot be so to any who are heartily in the Dissenting Interest, or Lovers of the Religion and Liberties of their Country. To be censured by such would give me real Pain. The Censures of others give me neither Pain nor Fear.

A second Treatise on the Notes of the Church.

A S A

S U P P L E M E N T

T O T H E

S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D A T

Salters-Hall, Jan. 16, 1734-5.

Being the Substance of two S E R M O N S preach'd
at the *Wednesday* Lecture at the *Old Jury*, Jan.
22, and 29.

By *SAMUEL CHANDLER.*

Omnes confitentur, in sola vera Ecclesia esse veram fidem, veram
peccatorum remissionem, veram spem salutis æternæ.

Bellarmin. de Not. Eccles.

I T I M. iii. 15.

*These things I write to thee,----that thou
mayst know how thou oughtest to behave
thy self in the house of God, which is
the church of the living God, the pillar
and ground of truth.*

HAVING in a former Discourse, though
delivered in * another Place, considered
the Scripture Characters of the Church
of Christ; and several also of those Marks
which Cardinal *Bellarmino* lays down as the Notes

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of

* *Salters-Hall, Thursday, Jan. 16, 1734-5.*

of the true Church, in order to prove that this Character belongs to the Church of *Rome*; I beg leave here to resume that Subject, because I then left it imperfect. The Cardinal's Notes which I then considered were these: 1. The Name Catholic assumed by the Church of *Rome*. 2. Antiquity. 3. Perpetual and uninterrupted Duration. 4. The Amplitude, or Multitude, and Variety of Believers. 5. The Succession of Bishops in the Church of *Rome*, from the Apostles to the present Times. 6. Agreement in Doctrine with the ancient Church. 7. The Union of the Members amongst themselves, and with the Head. 8. Sanctity, or Holiness of Doctrine. As to these, I have shewn, either that they are no Marks of the Church of Christ; or that if they are, they do not belong to the Church of *Rome*.

N O T E IX.

The Cardinal's ninth Note is, *Efficacy of Doctrine*; for the true Church alone, says he, *possesseth that Doctrine which converteth the Soul*.^{*} But, upon a little Consideration, it will appear, that this Note is far from serving the Cardinal's Purpose: For the Efficacy and Success of Doctrines, may be ascribed to various Causes.

Sometimes to the natural intrinsick Excellency of the Doctrines themselves; their being evidently agreeable to Truth and Reason, and tending to promote valuable and worthy Ends: To these Causes, the Success of the Gospel Religion was owing upon its first Publication, though preached by Men contemptible, as to outward Appearance; who had neither Arms nor Eloquence to enforce it on, or recommend it to the World; yea, though the Doctrines they preached had no temporal Advantages

^{*} Efficacia doctrinæ, sola enim vera Ecclesia habet doctrinam, — convertentem animam. Cap. 12.

vantages to recommend them, but the Profession of them was almost sure to be attended with Persecution, Poverty, and Death. And this Success of the Gospel, as it was partly owing to its natural Excellency and Goodness; its approving it self to the Reason and Consciences of Mankind; and its evident Tendency to promote the highest Happiness of Men, in the Knowledge, Service, and Acceptance of God; was, amongst many others, one good Argument of its Truth, and Agreableness to the Will of God. Whereas the peculiar Doctrines of the Church of *Rome*, cannot possibly have any Efficacy upon these Accounts; because they are many of them absurd and contradictory to all the Principles of Reason, and almost all of them calculated to promote the Power and Profit of the Priests, and to bring the Church of God into the most abject and deplorable Slavery.

The Doctrine of Transubstantiation is an Insult upon common Sense, an Objection which * *Bel-larmine* urges against some of the Principles of the *Lutherans*, to shew they cannot be true: For, how can that be the Body and Blood of Christ, which our Sight, Smell, Feeling, and Tasting, assure us is nothing more than a Wafer, or Piece of Bread? How can the individual Body of Christ, which is but one, and which is now in Heaven, be multiplied into a thousand Bodies at once, and be in the same instant in a thousand Places, and eaten a thousand Times over upon Earth, and yet, at the same time, remain whole and uneaten in Heaven? How is it possible that Christ, who instituted the Sacrament, could give himself to his Disciples with his own Hands, see himself eaten, swallowed, and devoured by them, without being eaten, swallowed, and devoured at all; be at the same time broken, and unbroken, within his Apostles, and without them; be

* Aperte repugnat veritati, ut Augustinus scribat, injuriam facere humanis sensibus qui hoc dicunt. De Not. Eccles. Not. 8.

be at the same Instant solid as Bread, and liquid as Wine; be as big as a Man, and as small as a Morfel of Bread? Was ever Invention so monstrous as this? Ever any Doctrine compounded of such palpable and stupid Absurdities? Is it not an Outrage upon every thing called Sense or Reason?

Again, the Worship of Images, Pictures, dead Mens Bodies, Relicks, and the like Things, is a Contradiction to the plainest Dictates of Truth and Reason, which lead us to the Adoration and Worship of God, the supreme and ultimate Object of Worship; who cannot be represented by any sensible Appearances, nor approve of any Veneration given by rational Beings to dead inanimate Objects, *that have neither eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor tongues to speak with.*

I am willing to allow, that the Worship paid to these things is relative only, or given to them for the Relation they have to the Objects they represent: So also was the Worship paid by many Heathens* to the Images, Temples, and Altars, of their Gods; which notwithstanding the Scriptures condemn as a very heinous Sin, and monstrous Impiety: And with the highest Reason; because dead and lifeless Images, or Pictures, can be no proper Representations of the living, spiritual and invisible God; and therefore not worthy of any relative Veneration, because those Images, or Pictures, cannot in the Nature of Things have any possible Relation to him, or convey to the Mind any true Idea of him.

As to the Images and Pictures of Christ, the making and worshipping them, is an absurd and irrational

* Πειρωμενος δε αι τι περι των θεων ευσεβες διανοεσθαι, και μελα τινος αποβλεπω εις τα ιερα των θεων, και τα αγαλματα τιμης και οσιωλης, σεβημενος ωσπερ αν ει παροντας εωρα της θεης. Αγαλματα γαρ και βωμους, και πυρος ασβεστη Φυλακην, και παντα απλως τα τοιαυτα συμβολα, οι πατερες εβηντο της παρθσιας των θεων, ην ινα εκεινα θεος νομισωμεν, αλλ ουα δι αυτων τως θεος θεραπευσωμεν. Julian, q. 293. Edit. Spanhem.

rational Superstition. For besides that, there is no Warrant for this in the New Testament Records, 'tis impossible to make any true Representation of him, as exalted to the right Hand of Glory, or that an Idol made by the Statuary or Carver, and called by his Name, should deserve that outward Prostration, or inward Veneration, which is due to Christ himself; the Wood, the Stone, and Metal, having no more intrinsick Excellency, and bearing no more Likeness, or Relation to Christ, after the Artificer hath formed it, and called it by his Name, than when growing in the Tree, or buried in the Bowels of the Earth.

And, as to the Images and Pictures of the *Virgin Mary*, and the Saints, together with their dead Bodies and Relicks, the worshipping them is, if possible, worse Folly and Superstition than the other; because there is no Reason or Precept for worshipping those Persons themselves, and by Consequence, none for worshipping their Images, Remnants of their Bodies, or any thing that belongs to them. And if the worshipping them without Warrant, yea, in Opposition to the plainest Intimations to the contrary, is real Idolatry; what Name of Reproach must the worshipping or venerating their Images and Relicks deserve? This Practice of worshipping dead Bodies, and Scraps of Bodies, is more stupid and absurd than almost any thing to be found amongst the *Pagans*; who, though they often deified their dead Heroes, yet either burned their Bodies, or let them remain quiet and undisturbed in their Graves and Sepulchres; and on this Account *Julian* reproaches the Christians of his Time, because *they* * *turned to the Worship of the Dead and their Relicks*. And
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* ΕΠΙ ΤΗΣ ΝΕΚΡΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΩ ΛΕΙΨΑΝΑ ΜΕΤΑΤΕΤΡΑΜΜΕΝΗΣ. *Julian*, p. 43.

in another place, * he says, *Who can sufficiently abhor your practice, in adding so many new dead persons to him who formerly died? You have filled all places with sepulchres and monuments, though 'tis no where commanded you to kneel before and worship them; yea, in opposition to the words of Jesus, Matt. xxiii. 27.*

Other Instances might be mentioned, such as worshipping in an unknown Tongue, and keeping the Scriptures from the knowledge of the People; because common Sense and Reason evidently assure us, that there can be no rational Devotion without Knowledge; and that if the Scripture be the Word of God, and contains a revelation of the divine Will to all Mankind, all Mankind must be concerned to understand it, and must by necessary Consequence have a right to read and search it.

And as these and the like Doctrines are evidently absurd and contradictory to the Principles of Reason, so they are plainly calculated, not to promote any real, wise and valuable Purpose, but to aggrandise the Power of the Priests, and to be a lasting Fund of Riches to the Clergy. What an high Opinion must the People have of their Priests, if they can be brought to believe, that by muttering a few Words, they can change a Moriel of Bread into their Saviour and God? That they can grant them Dispensations and Indulgences, and authoritatively absolve them from all their Guilt? That they can deliver them from all the Pains of Purgatory, and send them strait to Heaven by the Repetition of a few Masses for their Souls? How large are the Revenues that flow from the profitable Doctrines of Purgatory, Masses, priestly Absolutions, Penances, and the like Superstitions? How vast the Influence, which the Priests and Confessors have

* Πολλὰς ἐπεισαγούρας τῷ παλαιῷ νεκρῷ τῆς προσφάτης νεκρῆς, τίς ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀξίαν βδελύξεται πάντα ἐπληρώσας τὰ φῶν καὶ μνημαλίον, καὶ τοὶ ἐκ ἐκλήλει παρ' ὑμῶν ἔδωκεν τοῖς ταφῶν προσκυλινδεῖσθαι καὶ περιεπεῖν αὐτῆς, &c. Cyril. Cont. Jul. p. 335.

have over private Persons, Families, and Nations, by auricular Confessions, when they are let into the Secrets of Mens Conduct and Consciences, and have a Power to enjoin them what Discipline, and Penances, and Satisfactions they please? The Truth is, the whole System of Popery is a Scheme of Ambition and worldly Policy, calculated not to promote Knowledge and Virtue, and the Happiness of Mankind, but the Dominion and Grandeur of the Priests, at the Expence, and upon the most certain Ruins of each of these dear and valuable Interests. So that let the Efficacy of their Doctrines be what it will, it can be no Evidence that their Church is the Church of Christ; because that Efficacy cannot proceed from the intrinsic Excellency of these Doctrines, their Conformity to Truth and Reason, and their Tendency to promote the real Interest and Happiness of Mankind.

The Efficacy of particular Doctrines, however absurd and false, and particularly of those of the Church of *Rome*, may be very easily accounted for by Reasons, that will reflect but little Honour upon the Success that may attend them. When Doctrines are invented suitable to the corrupt Passions and Affections of Mankind, such Doctrines as tend to render them easy in their Vices, and reconcile Salvation with the Immoralities of a wicked Life; 'tis no wonder that even the generality of Mankind, who are led more by the Instincts of Sense, than the Dictates of Reason, should be found to countenance and embrace them; for as *Bellarmino* observes under this very Note * *What difficulty is there to instil poison into a man, who is ready prepared to take it?* Hence *St. Paul* ascribes the Prevalence of Error to this very Cause. Thus he tells the *Thessalonians*, that God would send a strong delusion, that those should believe a lye who had pleasure in unrighteousness,

* Quæ enim difficultas est instillare venenum homini parato ad id sumendum?

ousness, 2 *Theff.* ii. 10, 11, 12. And in his 2d. Epistle to *Timothy*, he says, *evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*, Chap. ii. 13.

Some of the Doctrines of *Mahometanism* were thus made palatable to the Inclinations of those, to whom that Impostor addressed himself; and that this is really the Case with many of the Doctrines of Popery, hath been shewn under a † former Head.

Again, the Prevalence or Efficacy of corrupt Doctrines, is oftentimes owing to deep Ignorance, and the want of means of better Information. To this the Superstitions and Idolatries of *Paganism* were in a great measure to be attributed. This was one Reason of the Successes of *Mahomet*, and of the Efficacy of his Doctrine amongst the *Arabians*; and the Papists well know that their own Errors and antichristian Practices are supported by the same Foundation. They have deprived the People of the sacred Scriptures, and of all other Books that may tend to their Information. They rigorously prohibit all Inquiries and Disputes about Religion, and inculcate an implicit Faith in the Dictates of the Church, and represent it as an heinous Sin, so much as to question or doubt about the Truth of her Decisions. And is it any wonder that Error should flourish under the Protection of Ignorance?

Add to this the great Subtleties and many Arts they make use of to propagate their Doctrines; *viz.* those pretended Miracles which they boast of in the Church of *Rome*, whereby they impose on the credulity of the weak Multitude, and instil into their Minds an high Veneration for the greatest Absurdities and Corruptions they have introduced into the House of God. Thus to persuade them that the consecrated Wafer is the Body and Blood
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† See Note VIII.

of Christ, they have invented Stories of Wafers dropping Blood when they have been pierced and cut by wicked Hereticks; lively Representations of which, in Pictures, I myself have seen publicly hung up in their Churches, for the Admiration and Establishment of the deluded People. To confirm them in the Worship of Images, they tell them of their sweating, moving their Eyes, bowing their Heads, and performing many wonderful Cures; which are either the Tricks of cunning Priests, or owing to satanical Delusions; it being impossible that God should perform any Miracles for the Establishment of so impious a Superstition. In like Manner the Liquefaction of *St. Januarius's* Blood, the miraculous Cures which have been said to be wrought by Relicks, and the like Rogueries of the Priests, are Arts to keep up an impure Veneration for dead Bodies, bits of Bones, and the fragments of Crosses and tattered Garments. Thus also they have feigned Apparitions of Spirits tortured in Purgatory, desiring the Prayers of the Living; and of other Spirits delivered from Pain and Prison by their Prayers and Masses; to propagate the Notion, and establish the People in the gainful Doctrines of Purgatory and Masses. It would be endless to mention all the Instances of this Kind that may be produced, and the numberless Frauds that have been used to impose on the People; many of which have been discovered to the Shame and Confusion of the Authors and Practisers of them.

Besides this, they frequently endeavour to support and colour over their Doctrines by the sound of Scripture-expressions; or by altering the Words, and corrupting the Sense of it. Thus, to prevent their Peoples Abhorrence of Image and Idol Worship, they have sometimes taken away the second Commandment; and, to keep up the Number of Ten, have divided the tenth into two. To
prove

prove the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, they urge the literal Sense of the Words, *This is my body*. And by the same Way they might prove that Christ is a Door, and a Vine; and that God himself is possessed of all bodily Parts and Passions. To prove that Holy Order is a Sacrament instituted by Christ, they cite those Words, *Do this in remembrance of me*; which a Child may see do not relate to Christ's granting his Apostles a Power to consecrate the Bread and Wine, but to their eating the Bread in Remembrance of him. In Support of the Doctrine of Purgatory, they urge, *He himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire*; to which they have added, in some of their Versions, *by the fire of Purgatory*. Innumerable such Abuses may be easily seen by those who will be at the Pains to consult their Confessions and Catechisms.

And to render all these Arts, and the like, the more effectual, the *Romish* Priests pretend great Compassion for the Souls of People, and boldly tell them there is no Salvation out of their Church; that, as Protestants, they are in a damnable State; that Protestants allow Salvation in the Communion of the Church of *Rome*; that they are divided amongst themselves, and that they censure and condemn each other for their Differences; and to render all these Arts the more effectual, they strengthen them with Money and Gifts, and other the like Appearances of Charity.

And finally, where all these Things will not do, they have other Methods, not less powerful to convince and convert Gainfayers, and secure the desired Efficacy to their Doctrines. 'Tis well known that Heresy amongst the Papists is a capital Crime, and punished in the most dreadful Manner that the Art of Man can invent; and that, according to them, it consists in believing any Thing contrary to the received Opinions of their Church, or not believing in all Matters as the Church belieyes. Now how is it possible that what they

call

call Heresy, which is in reality Truth and Righteousness, should ever spread amongst them, when they scruple no Methods of Injustice and Violence to suppress it in its Rise, and prevent its Growth? This hath been their Way in all Ages, either to convert Men by Force, or destroy all Opposers of their Errors and Superstitions. Thus they propagated and supported them in *Great Britain* by Fire and Faggot; in *Ireland* by the Massacre of above One Hundred and Forty Thousand Protestants; in *France* by publishing Crusadoes against Hereticks, destroying their Cities, and murdering Thousands for their Religion and Consciences; and by the *Parisian* * Massacre, for which, tho' contrived and carried on, and executed with diabolical Perfidiousness and Cruelty, a Jubilee was appointed at *Paris*, and solemn Thanks returned to God, as tho' it had been a Sacrifice acceptable to him. And not only thus, but as *Thuanus* † tells us, they received the News of it at *Rome* with Transports of Pleasure; and the Pope and Cardinals instantly repaired to *St. Mark's*, to thank God for so great a Favour conferred on the See of *Rome*, and appointed a Jubilee over the whole Christian World, for this Slaughter of the Hereticks in *France*. And I have now by me an Oration of *Anthony Muretus*, in praise of *Charles IX.* pronounced at *Rome* before Pope *Gregory XIII.* in which he ‡ blesses that memorable Night in which

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this

* Thuanus, Vol. III. p. 140. Edit. Buck.

† Ibid. p. 152.

‡ O noctem illam memorabilem, & in fastis eximiae alicujus notæ adjectione signandam! quæ paucorum seditiosorum interritu, regem a præsentis cædis periculo, regnum a perpetua civilium bellorum formidine liberavit. Qua quidem nocte stellas equidem ipsas luxisse solito nitidius arbitror, & flumen Sequanam majores undas volvisse, quo illa impurorum hominum cadavera evolveret & exoneraret in mare. O felicissimam mulierem Catharinam regis matrem, quæ cum tot annos admirabili prudentia parique sollicitudine regnum filio, filium regno conservasset, tum demum secura regnantem filium adspexit! O regis fratres, ipsos quoque beatos! — O diem denique illum plenum lætitiæ & hilaritatis, quo tu, Beatissime Pater, hoc ad

this accursed Slaughter was committed, extols the King, Queen-Mother, and Brethren of the King, for the Share they had in this execrable Villany; and calls the Pope himself *most blessed Father*, for his going in Procession *to return Thanks to God and St. Lewis for the welcome News when brought to him*. And even to this Day they support their Superstitions by Dragoonings, Imprisonments and Death in that Kingdom; and in *Spain, and Portugal, and Italy*, by the accursed Severities of an Inquisition.

You see here the Causes of the Efficacy of Popery; and is it any Wonder it should prevail, under such Methods to propagate it? Or can it be any Proof that the Church of *Rome* is the Church of Christ, because her Doctrines are successful, when that Success is owing to such violent and bloody Measures? * *Bellarmino* himself, when urged with the Success of *Mahometanism*, rightly objects, that *the great Numbers who embraced it, were drawn over by the Terror of Arms, not by the Force and Efficacy of its Doctrine*; and that *Mahomet himself taught in his Alcoran, that Men are to be forced by War to the Faith*. If this be an Objection against *Mahometanism*, it must be equally so against Popery; which teaches and useth the same Methods of Propagation, and hath spilt more Blood in Support of her antichristian Doctrines, than hath been ever spilt by the *Mahometan* Princes meerly on Account of their Religion. So that the Efficacy of the Doctrines of *Mahometanism* and Popery, is owing to the same Measures of cruelty and Persecution; and therefore, if mere Success or Efficacy of Doctrine be a

Sign

te nuncio allato, Deo immortalī, & Divo Hludovico regi, cujus hæc in ipso pervigilio evenerant, gratias acturus, indictas a te supplicationes pedes obristi! Quis autem optabilior ad te nuncius adferri poterat? aut nos ipsi quid felicius optare poteramus principium pontificatus tui? *Muret. Orat. Vol. I. p. 197. 198. Edit. Lubec.*

* *Mahometani autem traxerunt quidem multos; sed terrore armorum, non vi & efficacia doctrinæ. Quare ipsemet Mahometus in Alcorano, c. 18, 19. docet, bello cogendos homines ad fidem. Le. Not. Eccles. cap. 12.*

Sign of the Church of Christ, *Mahometans* have as much a Claim to that sacred Character as the *Papists*.

There is indeed a very powerful Influence which Popery generally hath on the Minds of Men, which is not much to the Reputation and Credit of it. For when once this false Religion hath got hold of their Minds, it renders them obstinate, and averse to all Information and farther Knowledge, and Enemies to the very Means of their Conviction and Salvation: It fills them with a censorious, uncharitable Spirit, and with Rancour and Malice towards all who differ from them; it too often prepares them for the most execrable Villanies, and changes the natural Sentiments and Dictates of Compassion and Tenderneſs into an unrelenting Hardneſs of Heart, and an infernal Satisfaction in the Punishments and Miseries of others. For as *Dr. Geddes* observes of the *Portugueze*, tho' all other Malefactors besides Hereticks are greatly lamented and pitied by them when they suffer Death; yet when Hereticks are roasted in lingring Fires, and crying out under their exquisite Tortures, *their Sufferings are beheld, by Persons of both Sexes and all Ages, with such Transports of Joy and Satisfaction as are not to be met with on any other Occasions whatsoever.* Such is the Spirit of their Religion! Such the dreadful Efficacy of their Doctrine!

Whenever these are the natural Effects of any Principles, nothing can be more certain than that they must be contrary to Truth and Religion. And, indeed, nothing can be more fallacious than to argue from the Prevalence of any Doctrines to the Truth and divine Authority of them: For the *Mahometan* Religion is much more universal than that of Christianity to this Day; and amongst Christians, *Arianism* could once boast of its Successes, and of having profelyted many Nations and Kingdoms. And at this Day, How many Nations embrace the Reformation, and the Doctrines of the Protestant Religion? And therefore, if the mere Efficacy of

Doctrine be a certain Note of the Church of Christ, the Papists must allow that we are as much the true Church of Christ as themselves; and they have no other Way to extricate themselves out of this Difficulty, but by saying with * *Bellarmino, that Hereticks only deceive Men, but cannot convert them to the Faith*, which is shamefully to beg the Question, but not to answer the Objection; and Protestants may with the highest Reason retort the Cardinal's Words upon himself. The Papists only deceive Men, but cannot convert them to the Faith. Papists *have indeed the scripture*, but will not suffer it to be read by the People, *and have not the true sense of scripture*: Nor is it any wonder that they sometimes pervert Protestants; for men are prone to go down into the broad and easy way which Popery opens; and God suffers it to be so, because of their ingratitude, who having been once enlightned, have not brought forth good fruits, answerable to the light they have received †

To conclude this Head, the mere Efficacy, or want of Efficacy in any Doctrine, proves nothing what the Nature of it is. As Error it self hath oftentimes amazing Success, and gains over innumerable Profelytes, so Truth is oftentimes despised and rejected; and yet remains Truth, though she hath few or none to follow her. Even our Saviour himself was wickedly treated by the Jews, and he had but few who received him, or embraced his Doctrine. His Apostles after him were opposed and persecuted, and the number of Converts they made, but comparatively small with the rest of Mankind. And yet they were the Messengers of God, and their Religion founded on Truth, and
worthy

* *Majorem partem Gothorum fuisse ab Arianis deceptam. Non igitur convertunt homines ad fidem hæretici, non possunt. Ibid.*

† *Hæretici habent quidem scripturam, sed non habent verum sensum scripturarum. — Neque etiam mirum est quod Catholicos pervertant, nam proni sunt homines ad descensum, ad viam latam & facilem quam illi apperiant. Et Deus id fieri finit propter ingratitudinem eorum, qui semel sunt illuminati, & lumini accepto bonis operibus non respondent. Id. Ibid.*

worthy the Acceptation of all Mankind ; and the Reason why their Doctrine had no more Efficacy and Success, was not any defect in its intrinsick Excellency, or want in the Evidence which attended it ; but the sinful Prejudices and vicious Passions of Men themselves, who being Enemies to Righteousness were the Enemies of Truth, and therefore Enemies to the pure and uncorrupted Doctrines of Christianity.

N O T E X.

The next Note is, * *the holiness of the lives of the authors, or first fathers of our religion ; such as the patriarchs and prophets, then apostles and teachers, and lastly the founders of religious orders ;* who, as *Bel-larmine* affirms, were Pious, Chaste, and Sober, and endowed with all manner of Virtues ; whereas Hereticks are all of them very bad Persons, and † *not one of them good.*

But I am apprehensive that the Cardinal will not do his Church much good by this Note : For as Protestants we acknowledge no other Authors of our Religion but Jesus Christ and his Apostles, the Holiness of whose Lives is a great Recommendation of the Doctrines they taught ; and consequently by whomsoever that Doctrine is embraced, they may glory in this, as one Evidence amongst others of its divine Original ; and therefore this is so far from being a Note that any one particular Church is more the Church of Christ than another, that it is an Honour which all Churches may boast of, who maintain their Doctrines in their original Purity.

As to all others, we renounce them as the Authors of our Religion. For in the Bible alone is the

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* Sanctitas vitæ auctorum, sive primorum patrum nostræ religionis. *De. Not. Ec. Cap. 13.*

† Ex hereticis nullus est bonus. *Ibid.*

Religion of Protestants : And though the Fathers and Doctors of the Church may be allowed, some of them, to have been excellent and good Men ; yet they were fallible and liable to Errors, and had their Defects and Blemishes as well as Virtues. It were easy to shew this of some of the first Writers in the Christian Church. Now the real Sanctity of good Men is no Vindication of their Errors, and of Consequence no Argument that the Church of *Rome* is the true Church, if she hath embraced their Errors. The truly Primitive † Fathers however knew nothing of her distinguishing Doctrines, and therefore she hath no more Countenance from them than she hath from the Scriptures of Infallible Truth. And if the Holiness of such Fathers add any Credit to any Cause, this Honour will accrue to the Protestant Churches, who embrace all the Principles they taught from the Word of God, and reject their Errors because contrary to that Word.

As to the ancient Hereticks, such as *Theobutes*, *Simon Magus*, *Valentinus*, *Marcian*, *Montanus*, *Arius*, and others mentioned by *Bellarmino*, and censured by him as proud, and violent Disturbers of the Church ; Protestants' neither acknowledge their Authority, nor embrace their Heresies ; and therefore whatever were their particular Vices, as Protestants are not their Patrons, Defenders, and Imitators, they reflect no more Dishonour upon them or their Principles, than they do upon the Clergy and Members of the Church of *Rome*.

And when the Cardinal adds, that *the sects of his age*, meaning the different Parties of the Reformation, *sprung from ambition, pride, envy, and hatred* ; if this was true, 'tis nothing to the Purpose. For if the first Reformers were influenced by these Motives, yet if they really preached the Religion of Christ, may we not say with *St. Paul* : *Some preach*

* See Note II.

preach Christ even of envy and strife, and of contention; supposing to add Affliction to my bonds? What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached: And therein I do rejoice; yea, and will rejoice, Phil. i. 15---18.

And indeed the Question is not how the Reformation came in, or by what Kind of Instruments it was carried on? But whether the Reformation is the Cause of Truth and genuine Christianity? Whether the main Doctrines of it can be proved to be the Doctrines of Christ and his Apostles? If they can, the Protestant Religion will be the true Religion; to whatsoever Causes the preaching of it was originally owing, or whatsoever may be the Characters or personal Faults of the first Reformers. *Peter* himself denied his Master with Oaths and Curses, and was guilty of great Dissimulation, and reproved for it by *St. Paul*; and yet these personal Blemishes were no just Reflection upon the Cause of Christianity. Not to add, that God in his Providence is oftentimes pleased to make use even of bad Men to accomplish his own Designs, and to overrule even their Vices to subserve the Purposes of his Wisdom and Goodness.

It may therefore be allowed that *Luther* had his Faults. And who is without them? But doth any consistent Protestant pretend to justify him in them? Or do his personal Failings prove that he was not to be commended for bravely opposing the corrupt Doctrines and Practices of the Church of *Rome*? But when the Cardinal adds, that *Luther's* ambition, and not being able to bear that the publishing the Pope's indulgences should be transferred from the monks of his order to the Predicant friars, gave rise to his own Sect; this is neither candidly nor truly said. *Luther* himself ascribes another Reason of his Conduct in opposing the Indulgences, viz.

* because the unbounded licence of preaching indulgences occasioned many errors, was ridiculed by some in the taverns, and exposed the holy priesthood of the church to scorn. Yea Maimburg himself, who wrote against *Luther*, acknowledges that there were very scandalous abuses committed in the affair of the indulgences; and that it cannot be denied but that this gave occasion to *Lutheranism*.† An abundant Justification of *Luther's* Conduct this, in the Opposition he began to the Church of *Rome*.

But was *Luther* as proud and imperious as the Cardinal makes him; are there no Blemishes, no Vices chargeable on the great Men, Doctors, and Founders of Orders in the Church of *Rome*? We must as Protestants be excused from an over high Opinion and Veneration for them, because we know that many of them were weak and superstitious Men, who placed Religion in unnecessary Abstinences, whimsical Severities, and useless Ceremonies, more than in real Piety, and substantial Virtue. Others of them are canonized for Saints, only for their blind attachment to the See of *Rome*, and the Corruptions of that Church; and their Zeal against the pure and uncorrupted Doctrines of Christ, and the Professors of them. Others of them were insolent, bloody-minded and cruel Persecutors; such as *St. Francis* and *Dominick*, who introduced the Inquisition, and were the Occasion of innumerable Violences and Murders. Such Men may pass for Saints in the Church of *Rome*, which sanctifies the most outrageous Wickednesses, when committed for her Benefit and Support; but with others, who have not divested themselves of all Humanity, they will be abhorred and detested, as the Plagues and Curses of Mankind. A-

* Istas positiones omnes coegit me ponere, quod viderem alios falsis opinionibus infici, alios per tabernas ridere, & sanctum sacerdotium ecclesiæ manifesto ludibrio habere, occasione tam effusæ licentiæ predicandarum veniarum. *Seckendorf*. l. 1. Sect. 13. §. 27.

† *Seckend*. l. 1. Sect. 6.

Amongst these Holy Men and Doctors, in which the Church of *Rome* glories, 'tis pity the Cardinal hath not produced the Popes, those visible Heads of their Hierarchy, those holy Successors of St. *Peter*, under whom, as we are told, the whole Christian Flock is united. But the Reason of the Cardinal's Silence on this Head is obvious. He well knew the Men, and that he had nothing to boast of in their Lives and Characters. *Platina*. * expressly calls many of them short-liv'd Monsters; and tells us, that they obtained the Popedom by Bribes, that they departed from the Steps of *Peter*, were influenced by Ambition, and governed by the most implacable Resentments and Hatreds. So that if the Church of *Rome* is to be judged of by the Characters of her Popes, she must be esteemed as the most Wicked, Degenerate, and Profligate Church in the whole World.

As to the Protestant Laity, it must be acknowledged that many of them are very corrupt, and live very unsuitable to the Privileges they enjoy. But when the Cardinal adds, *ex hæreticis nullus est bonus, no heretick is good*; this is a Specimen of his Charity, and needs no Answer. There were, I question not, too much Reason for the Complaints of the first Reformers against many who pretended to embrace the Reformation; but were those of the *Romish* Communion less criminal? *Myconius*, who was Pastor and Superintendant of *Gotha*, gives the following Account of the miserable Condition of the Church before the Reformation. † “ The
“ Antichristian Papacy was so abominable and
“ foul a Beast, that it could not be sufficiently de-
“ scribed by *Paul* and *John*. The Passion and Sa-
“ tisfaction of Christ was treated like *Homer's O-*
“ *dysses*, as a mere History. Nothing was menti-
“ oned about Works really good; these were mean
“ Things,

* *Christ. I. p. 325.*

† *Seckend. l. 1. sect. 2.*

“ Things. All Methods were invented to bring
 “ in Money to the Priests and Monks: They that
 “ gave most, were sure to merit Eternal Life.
 “ Rapes and Adulteries were common. These
 “ were small Crimes, easily to be expiated by the
 “ Papal Indulgence. Whores and Whore-mon-
 “ gers came to purchase the Grace of it.” And as
 to the Priests themselves, the Canons, Monks,
 and others of the Clergy, in the Town of *Gotha*,
 the same Author says of them, “ They were e-
 “ steemed sacred, and such as could Merit Heaven
 “ for us. But their Behaviour was so very vile
 “ and profligate, as that nothing in the whole
 “ World could exceed it: For being prohibited
 “ Matrimony, and not having the Gift of Conti-
 “ nency, they filled the City with Rapes, Adul-
 “ teries, and Sodomitical Crimes.” I forbear to
 mention many other Testimonies of the like Na-
 ture, and shall only add, that though, to the Re-
 proach of Protestants, there are many of them
 very corrupt and immoral; yet their Vices are
 far from exceeding those of the Papists, even those
 that are committed at *Rome* itself, not only by the
 Laity, but by their very Cardinals, Bishops, and
 Priests. So little Reason have they to boast of the
 Holiness and Virtue of those of their Communi-
 on.

N O T E XI.

Bellarmino's next Note is, *The Glory of Miracles*.
 And this Mark he divides into two Parts: 1. *That*
Miracles are necessary for the Confirmation of a new
Faith, and extraordinary Mission. 2. *That real Mi-*
racles are effectual and sufficient for this Purpose. *
 From the first of these, the Cardinal infers that the
 Pro-

* *Gloria Miraculorum.* Sunt autem duo fundamenta præmittenda. Unum, quod miracula sint necessaria ad novam fidem, vel extraordinariam missionem. Alterum, quod sint efficacia & sufficientia. *Ibid.* Cap. 14.

Protestants have not the true Church amongst them; and from the latter, that the true Church is the Church of *Rome*. Let us consider each of these a little distinctly.

1. Miracles are necessary for the Confirmation of a new Faith and an extraordinary Mission, and that therefore Protestants cannot be the true Church; because, though they preach a new Faith, and are not sent by the ordinary Prelates, they have no Miracles to confirm their Doctrine or Mission. This is roundly said, but it hath the Misfortune to be partly false, and partly nothing to the Purpose. For,

1. 'Tis not universally true that Miracles are necessary for the Confirmation of a new Faith; *i.e.* of Principles contrary to such as have been long receiv'd, and embrac'd by the Generality of Mankind; in which Respect, Principles of everlasting Truth may be said to be new: For the main Principles of all true Religion are founded in the very Reason and Nature of Things, and demonstrable to the Minds of all impartial Considerers by the strongest Arguments, and need not the Help of Miracles to confirm them, and can never be made one Jot more certain and true than they are in themselves, though ever so many Wonders should be wrought in Support of them. Thus the Being and Perfections of God, that he, and he only, is to be worshipp'd and adored, that his Worship must consist in Purity of Heart, and Holiness of Life, rather than in external Rites and Ceremonies; and that moral Virtue is more excellent in itself, and acceptable to God, and conducive to the Happiness of Mankind than Immorality and Vice: These, and the like great Articles of Religion, stand upon the certain and unalterable Foundations of Reason and Truth, and are easily discoverable by Men's reasonable Powers without any Help of Revelation, if they will make a right and impartial Use of them; and though Miracles may be some-
times

times proper to awaken Men's Attention to the Consideration of these Things, yet they need not Miracles to ascertain their Truth and Certainty, or to oblige Men to believe and embrace them. And therefore, whosoever teaches such Principles as these, he deserves to be believed and credited for the Sake of the Doctrines themselves, though he neither pretends to a divine Mission, nor gives the proper Testimonials of it by real and undoubted Miracles.

Nor doth the Prevalence of contrary Errors, and their having been long embraced by Nations and Kingdoms, make any Alteration in the Case : For tho' the Doctrines of true Religion, when first published, will appear new to those, who have been brought up in old Superstitions, which have been strengthened and confirmed by long Practice, and universal Example ; yet when they are agreeable to, and may be demonstrated by the most evident Reason, their appearing new can be no Argument against their Truth ; and as they have Truth and Reason thus to support them, 'tis absurd to expect or demand Miracles to confirm them. And therefore, though Protestants make no Pretences to Miracles for the Confirmation of their Doctrines, and though when they first preached them, they were so far new, as they were contrary to those Errors of Popery, which had universally obtained for several Ages ; yet as they were many of them agreeable to the most certain Principles of Reason, Reason was sufficient to demonstrate their Truth, without any supernatural Evidence whatsoever ; and to expect the Testimony of Miracles in Proof, that Angels, and dead Men, and dead Bodies, Images and Pictures, old Relicks, Crosses, and the like Things, are not to be worshipped, is as idle and vain, as to demand Miracles to prove, that a Man is not God, a Bone is not a living Man, or a wooden Cross

Cross the Person who was crucified and died upon it. Again,

2. Though the Protestant Religion was a new Faith when first preached, in respect of those Corruptions which had for so many Ages before prevailed in the Church of *Rome*, yet there needed no Miracles to confirm and establish it; because in reality it was no new Faith, but the ancient Doctrine of the Gospel, which *was at first preached by the Lord himself, and afterwards by his holy apostles, God himself bearing them witness, by divers gifts and miracles, and signs of the holy Ghost*; by which it was abundantly proved to be the Doctrine of God, and upon which Account all farther Proof became entirely needless. The Reformation introduced no new Gospel, but was only a Revival of the old one; it only cleared the Religion of Christ from those Corruptions and Idolatries, and Absurdities, with which the Follies and Superstitions of Men had blended it. And for this Work, they had sufficient Authority and Assistance without any Help of new Miracles, *viz.* the infallible Word of God, which contains an authentick Account of the Religion of Christ Jesus, and of that original Evidence with which it was so gloriously confirmed. What need then of farther Miracles for the Proof of what God had already set his Seal to? Was not that which was given by Christ and his Apostles abundantly sufficient? If it was, Protestants have solid Evidence to appeal to in Confirmation of their Religion, even the unquestionable Miracles of Christ and his Apostles in the first Age of the Church, which are the sure Foundation of the Christian Faith, and the only unquestionable Evidence that can be safely depended on.

But now what Miracles have the Papists to boast of, or that they can alledge in favour of their distinguishing Doctrines; when those Doctrines themselves were none of them ever so much as heard of in the Christian Church for above two whole

whole Centuries, and many of them not till seven, eight, or nine hundred Years after the Publication of the Gospel? As their Doctrines were never taught by Christ and his Apostles, their Miracles could be no possible Confirmation of them; and by Consequence, their Faith, as it is truly a new Faith, never preached by the Prophets of the Old Testament, nor by the Apostles of the New, many Ages later than the Gospel Doctrine, and introduced upon the Ruins of it, must have had Miracles to support and confirm it, by the Cardinal's own Principles; and therefore cannot be receiv'd as the Doctrine of God, because it hath not had that miraculous Confirmation, which he himself allows every new Faith ought to have. Farther,

3. Though I will not pretend to say, that the Reformation was a real Miracle, yet it was brought about in so unexpected a Manner, and by such extraordinary Methods, as will justify any sober Person in ascribing it to the Influence and Conduct of divine Providence. It came into the World just as Christianity did, in a Time of the grossest Ignorance and Darkeness. It was propagated just as that was, by Preaching, Reason, and Argument, and by the Sufferings and Blood of its Confessors and Martyrs. The first Promoters of it were comparatively mean Men, that had neither Birth, nor Riches to recommend them. It was first published in a Corner, and yet had afterwards an amazing Success through almost all the Nations of *Europe*; so that it might well be compared to the Leaven, and the Mustard-seed in the Gospel. It was opposed as the Gospel was by the Powers of this World, and all the Methods of the most cruel and bloody Persecutions. And yet it triumphed over all Opposition, prevailed against long established Corruptions, and all the Arts and Violences of Men to crush it in its Infancy; 'till at last it became the Religion of Nations and Kingdoms, and continues to be so to this Day, notwithstanding the number-

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less Endeavours that have been made use of wholly to extirpate and destroy it. And doth not the Hand of God appear in all this? May we not truly say, *this is the Lord's doing, and 'tis wonderful in our eyes?* If the Efficacy of any Doctrine be a Note of the true Church, surely, as Protestants, we have some Claim to it; especially as this Efficacy hath been only owing to the Nature of the Doctrine we preach, and not to any Subtleties or Violences that we have practised on Mankind to embrace and receive it.

4. As to the Mission of the first Reformers to preach the Doctrines of the Gospel, in Opposition to the Corruptions of Popery, as they did not pretend to preach any thing but what was contained in the sacred Writings, and as they never assumed the Character of *extraordinary messengers from God*, the Testimony of Miracles became absolutely needless. They were generally speaking Men of Learning and Abilities, capable of understanding the original Records of Christianity, and therefore capable of explaining those Records to others, and preaching those Truths which they themselves believed. And this was Furniture and Qualification enough for the Mission to which they pretended; and indeed every Man, who is thus qualified, hath a Right to preach the Gospel of Christ, and to oppose with all his Might those Corruptions which deform or destroy the Church of God.

Though therefore, it is certainly true, as *Bellarmino* says, that *the first Reformers were not sent by the ordinary Prelates*, will it follow from thence, that they had no Right to preach the Gospel? By no means. For how came those Prelates to be *the Senders general*? How came they to have the sole Right to commission Men to *labour in the Word and Doctrine*? We demand a Copy of their Warrant and Commission for this Purpose from Christ or his Apostles, and they must excuse us from believing them upon their own Word.

The Apostle writing to the Saints and faithful Brethren at Colosse, exhorts them: *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another.** And again, *Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every Man†.* In his Epistle to the Thessalonians, he commands them: *Warn the unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, quench not the spirit, despise not prophesyings, prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.‡* And in his second Epistle: *We command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw your selves from every brother that walks disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed§.* The Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells them, *for the time, i.e. considering how long they had been converted, ye ought to be teachers**.* St. James, writing to the twelve Tribes scattered abroad, lets them know, *If any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death††;* by which he supposes one Christian capable of converting another, who errs from the Truth, from the Error of his Way, and saving his Soul. St. Peter calls the scattered Strangers *a royal priesthood‡‡*, and commands them, *As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, as of the ability which God giveth.§§* And finally, St. John tells those he wrote to: *Beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits whether they are of God**.* These, and many other like Passages that might be mentioned,

* Colos. iii. 16.

† Id. iv. 6.

‡ 1 Thess. v. 14 — 21.

** Heb. v. 12.

†† James v. 19. 20.

§§ Id. iv. 10, 11.

** 1 John iv. 1.

§ 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14.

‡‡ 1 Pet. ii. 9.

ed, are Warrant enough for any serious and understanding Christians to teach, admonish, and, if they can, to convert others who have erred from the Truth, to try the Spirits of those who pretend to be Teachers and Prophets, and to oppose them if they find them to be antichristian and erroneous Spirits. And therefore, though the first Reformers had no Mission from Popish Prelates and Bishops, they had what is much better, an abundant Warrant from the sacred Writings, to protest against, and warn Men of the Corruptions of the Church of *Rome*, and to preach to as many as would hear them, the Doctrines of pure and undefiled Christianity.

The Bishops and Prelates were almost all of them in a Confederacy against Righteousness and Truth. The Corruptions of Religion were the things by which they maintained their Luxury, Pomp and Avarice; so that it was manifestly against their Interest to encourage a Reformation, or commission Men to promote it. Must therefore Christianity ever remain under those Corruptions, because it was the secular Interest of the Bishops and Clergy to support them? Must no Men preach the pure and uncorrupted Religion of Christ, because the Bishops refused to send them; and the whole Gospel become ineffectual to convert and save Men, because the ordinary Prelates made their Profits from their Ignorance, Vices, and Ruin? Ridiculous Supposition! to imagine, that God hath made the Religion of his Son to depend on the Mission of interested, designing Priests; and the preaching of his Gospel to be subject to the Pleasure of those who are Enemies to the Purity and governing Design of it. The Mission of Bishops and Prelates is in it self a trifling Circumstance, of little or no Importance, of which there is little or no mention in the sacred Writings; and if Men are otherwise qualified by the Providence and Grace of God,

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by sufficient Knowledge, by strong Inclination, and a real undissembled Piety, to preach the Gospel, they have one of the best Commissions from God that they can desire, to engage in this sacred Work, without any need of Miracles to confirm their Mission; because every Man hath a natural Right to propagate Truth and Righteousness, and 'tis every Christian's certain Duty to promote the Religion of God and the Redeemer, as he hath Ability and Opportunity; though all the Prelates in the World should refuse to authorize him; or, in the Language of the Church, by Imposition of Hands to ordain him. But thus much as to the first Part of this Note. I now come,

2. To consider the other Part of this Argument, *viz.* the Miracles which the Papists boast of in Confirmation of their Religion, and as wrought by, and in Favour of their Church; or to prove that it is, in Reality, the true Church of Christ.

1. And here let it be observed, that whatever Miracles can be supposed to prove, they can never prove the Truth of real Absurdities. They can never prove that the whole is more, or bigger than it self; *i.e.* that one individual single Body is, or can be ten thousand Bodies, and present in ten thousand Places at the self-same Time. They can never prove that a single Body is it self, and different from it self; *i.e.* that a Wafer, under the Accidents of Bread, is really a Man; much less that it is God, the eternal, uncreated God; because these are self-evident Contradictions, and therefore incapable in their very Nature of being proved by any kind of Evidence whatsoever.

2. Again, Miracles can never prove the Truth of Doctrines contradictory to each other, or of Doctrines contrary to such as have been already sufficiently proved by real and uncontested Miracles; because this is absolutely to destroy the very Evidence it self, and making it equally to
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serve the Purposes of Truth and Falshood; nothing being more plain, than that contrary Doctrines cannot possibly be on both Sides true. If therefore it is a true Doctrine, and hath been confirmed by the Testimony of God himself, that *there is but one mediator between God and man, even the man Christ Jesus*; no Miracles can prove that Angels and Saints are Mediators as well as Christ, because these are two opposite contradictory Doctrines, one of which must be necessarily and unavoidably false. And farther,

3. Miracles can never prove that Idolatry and Superstition is the true and acceptable Worship of God; that Images, and Pictures, and Relicks, and the like dead and senseless Things, are Objects of Worship; both because 'tis absurd to suppose it, and contrary to common Sense and Reason; and because God can never give a Sanction to his own Dishonour, countenance what is contrary to his own Glory, or command Men to give that Worship to the Creature which is not their Due, but due only to himself the eternal and blessed Creator. And therefore, as these Absurdities, Contradictions and Impieties, are all adopted into the Faith of the Church of *Rome*, 'tis impossible that any real Miracles can have been wrought by God in Vindication of them, or indeed that they can be so much as capable of any Demonstration or Proof. 'Tis in vain therefore that the Papists appeal to the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles, which were wrought only in Confirmation of those Doctrines which were taught by Christ and his Apostles; and not as Proofs of those Corruptions, which they have introduced into his Church, to the Disgrace of Christ's Religion, and the manifest Perversion of the great Design and real Tendency of his Gospel. Since therefore the Miracles of Christ and his inspired Apostles were wrought in Confirmation of Doctrines contrary to those

taught by the Church of *Rome*, that Church wants this Proof of the Truth of her Doctrines, and of Consequence this Note of her being the true Church.

What must we say then of all those Miracles of which the Church of *Rome* boasts, for a Succession of many Ages? I answer, that supposing any real Miracles have been wrought in Vindication of her corrupt Doctrines and Practices, the Workers of them are by no means to be regarded and hearkened to; no, not if he who did them were an Angel from Heaven, because the Gospel of Christ Jesus is immutable, and the Men are pronounced accursed who willingly pervert it.

'Tis laid down by *St. Paul*, as one Mark of the great Apostacy from the Christian Church, and of the Character of *the man of sin, and son of perdition, that his coming should be after the working of satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness in those that perish.** And of consequence, this Power, and these Signs and Wonders, are not to be regarded as we value our Salvation, and would not be given up of God to *strong delusions to believe a lye.* Hence our blessed Lord cautions his Disciples: *There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs, and wonders: But, behold, I have told you before: Wherefore, believe it not.†*

So that if the Papists teach you another Gospel than what the Apostles preached, believe them not; no, not if they perform unquestionable Signs and Wonders. You may assure your selves those Signs could never be done by the Influence of that holy Spirit that guided the Apostles, who is the Spirit of Truth, and can never contradict his own Testimony, nor confirm a Religion contrary to Christ's. And therefore, if the Miracles boasted of by Papists, as wrought in Confirmation of their Errors, were real; they were unquestionably *lying Wonders* of the Working of Satan; Wonders

* 2 Thess. ii. 9. † Matt. xxiv. 24, 25, 26.

wrought in Confirmation of a lye; or else the delusive Impositions of that evil Spirit, to deceive and pervert those, *who have pleasure in unrighteousness, and will not receive the love of the truth that they may be saved.*

The truth indeed is, that many, if not all, of the pretended Miracles of the Church of *Rome*, are the inventions of idle, superstitious Monks; or the Impostures of crafty designing Priests, to create in the People a reverence for their own Corruptions, and to bind them the faster in Obedience and Subjection to themselves. The legends of their Saints abound with the most palpable Absurdities, and romantick Impossibilities; their Miracles have no Characters of probability attending them, nor any authentick vouchers to support them. Many of them have been proved to be mere Frauds and Cheats, and others of them may be performed by Men of common Ingenuity and Dexterity. So that there is no Proof of real Miracles having been ever wrought amongst them; and therefore, 'tis with as little Truth and Modesty, that they boast of the Glory of their Miracles, as of the Purity of their Doctrine.

NOTE XII.

The Cardinal's twelfth Note is, * *The light of prophecy; for as Christ promised the church the gift of miracles, so also he did the gift of prophecy*, in the third Chapter of the Prophecy of *Joel*. To this, a short Answer will be sufficient.

1. That Prophecy can no more prove than Miracles, that false Doctrines are true, or that the Idolatry of the Church of *Rome*, is the true Religion of Jesus Christ.

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2. That

* Lumen propheticum. Sicut enim Christus promittit, Ecclesie donum miraculorum, ita etiam, *Joel* iii. promittit donum prophetie. *Cap.* 15.

2. That the Prophecy of *Joel* doth not in the least assure the Church that the Gift of Prophecy should be a permanent Gift: Yea, *St. Peter* seems to assert the contrary, when he tells the *Jews*, that the Effusion of the Spirit on the Apostles at the Feast of *Pentecost*; was that which was spoken by the prophet *Joel* † *i. e.* it was the real Accomplishment of that Prediction by him; and therefore, the Continuation of that Gift beyond the Apostolick Age, was not necessary to that Accomplishment; and therefore no necessary Mark of the true Church.

3. If Prophecy be a necessary Note of the true Church, it certainly follows that the Church can never be, in some Part or other of it, without this Gift; because whenever it wholly ceases, then one essential Mark of the true Church ceases too; and consequently the Church of *Rome* can never make out her claim to this Character. Because *Bellarmino* himself doth not undertake to prove that his Church was never without it, and only mentions three Persons, *St. Bennet*, *St. Barnard*, and *St. Francis*, who had it since the time of *Austin*, *i. e.* about the compass of one thousand two hundred Years. And therefore, this Gift can be no essential Mark of the true Church, nor the want of it amongst Protestants any Proof that they are not a Part of it; or else the Church of *Rome* herself can have no Pretensions to this Character, which, for the greatest Part of above one thousand two hundred Years, appears to be evidently destitute of it.

4. Nor indeed is there any solid Proof that they, to whom they attribute this divine Gift, ever possessed it. The many fabulous Legends they have invented, and the base Methods they have taken to support their Errors, render all the Accounts of the Prophecies of their pretended Saints justly liable to Suspicion. Men may sometimes make very
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† Acts ii. 16.

probable Gueſſes of future Things; becauſe of a certain Concurrence of Affairs, which render ſuch events highly probable, without ever deſerving the Character of Prophets, or indeed having a Title to the Character of good Men.

5. The Religion of Proteſtants, which is the Religion of the Bible, was deliver'd by Men really poſſeſſed of a prophetick Spirit, and by Conſequence, hath the Confirmation of Prophecy as well as Miracles. Whereas, the diſtinguiſhing Doctrines of the Church of *Rome* were none of them preached by Apoſtles or Prophets, and are not to be found in the ſacred Writings, and thus have neither the Evidence of Miracles or Prophecy to ſupport them. I may juſtly add on this Head,

6. That amongſt Proteſtants, there have been diſverſe good and pious Men who have ſpoken of future Things with great Clearneſs, and which have actually accordingly come to paſs; and who therefore have at leaſt as much a right to claim the Honour of this prophetick Inſpiration, as any Perſons whatſoever that can be mentioned in the Church of *Rome*.

NOTE XIII.

The next Note is, * *The confeſſion even of adverſaries* in favour of the Church of *Rome*; whereas the *Catholicks* are never found to *praiſe*, or *commend* the doctrine, or life of *hereticks*: But this Mark proves nothing more, than that Proteſtants have more Charity, or leſs Prudence than the *Papiſts*. If Proteſtants commend any thing that is commendable in any of the Writers of the *Romiſh* Church, they act according to the Rules of Juſtice and Charity, how much ſoever they differ from them in the

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* Confessio adverſariorum. Nunquam inveniuntur Catholici laudare aut approbare doctrinam aut vitam ullorum hæreticorum. *Cap.*
16.

essentials of Religion. And if Papists in general censure, and reproach, and revile all Protestants, whatever be their Virtues and Excellencies, meerly because they differ from them in their religious Principles, 'tis an Argument that they have neither Justice nor Charity in them; and consequently can be no Argument that they are the Church of Christ.

Besides all consistent Protestants unanimously condemn the Church of *Rome* as guilty of Heresy, Schism, and great Corruptions in the Doctrine and Worship of Christ; and though some may allow her to be the true Church, notwithstanding all her gross Abuses of the Christian Religion, they are generally such as have favour'd the Superstitions of *Rome*, and shewn a very good Inclination to become reconciled to it. This was true of *Laud* and his Brethren in the Time of *Charles I.* and of all those of the Clergy in the present time, if any such there be, who are his Favourers and Followers. They want to maintain the Character of God's Ambassadors, and the Notion of a lineal Descent from the Apostles, as their Successors in Power and Dignity; and therefore, the Church of *Rome* must be a true Church to convey the Succession down to them, though she hath scarce a single Mark of the Church of Christ belonging to her.

But the Praises of such Men are of as little Efficacy, as the Curses of the Church of *Rome*. They neither of them prove any Thing at all: And 'tis meer trifling with the World to put the Approbation of mortal Men against the Censure of Scripture, and the Sentence of the Spirit of God. The Doctrine and Practice of the Church of *Rome*, are expressly condemned by the Oracles of Truth; and therefore, it signifies nothing though the whole World should justify or commend her.

NOTE XIV.

The next Note is, * *The unhappy exit, or death of those who have opposed the church of Rome.* Thus the Cardinal tells us that *Luther* and *Oecolampadius* died suddenly, *Zuinglius* was killed in War against the Catholics, *Carlostadius* was killed by the Devil, and *Calvin* was eaten up of Worms, and died cursing and blaspheming: There is need of but few Words to shew the Impertinence and Inconclusiveness of this Mark.

For the arguing from the manner of Mens Death, to the Goodness or Badness of the Cause and Principles they have espoused, hath no Foundation in Reason or Scripture, and can proceed from nothing but Superstition or Presumption. 'Tis mere Superstition to imagine, that God goes out of the common Method of his Providence to punish the Sins of particular Persons; or that the Accidents which prove fatal to them, and generally happen according to the ordinary Course of Things, are inflicted on them as Judgments for extraordinary Offences. 'Tis also great Presumption, as it implies a bold and rash determining concerning those secret Methods of the divine Conduct and Government, which can never be known without an immediate Revelation.

'Tis also contrary to the plainest Determinations of the sacred Writings, and the Judgment of the Spirit of God contained therein. The wise Man tells us, *That all things come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous and the wicked, to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: As is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.*

* Infelix exitus, seu finis eorum qui ecclesiam oppugnant. Cap.

oath. And again, There be just men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; and there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous. † Sometimes righteous and good Men are cut off by an unexpected Stroke: For there is a just man that perishes in his righteousness; ‡ whilst wicked Men live in Prosperity, and prolong their Days; For there is a wicked man that prolongs his life in wickedness.*

The truth of these Observations may be proved by many Facts, and therefore, were all the Instances mentioned by the Cardinal just as he represents them, they would prove nothing of what he alleges them for, *viz.* that the Churches of the Reformation are not the Churches of Christ, or that the first Reformers were evil Men and Hereticks. But he is mistaken in his Facts, or hath wilfully misrepresented them. Of *Luther*, he says, that he died suddenly in the Night, having chearfully, and in good Health, eaten a plentiful Supper in the Evening; But this is not true; for *Luther* had been in a declining State of Health for several Months before his Death, and had lived in the constant Expectation of, and Preparation for it. The Evening before he died he supped with his Friends, and talked chearfully with them both upon serious and other Affairs. In the intervals of his Pains he cried out, *O heavenly father, though I must be taken out of this life, yet, I certainly know that I shall dwell for ever with thee, and that no one shall take me out of thy hands.* And after a solemn Confession of his Faith in Christ, the Agonies of Death came on him, and folding his Hands together, he gently breathed out his last, and died.

This is the Relation of *Justus Jonas*, who was present at his Decease, as given by *Seckendorf*, § and utterly destroys the credit of the Story of his dying

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* Eccles. ix. 2.

† Id. viii. 14.

‡ Id. vii. 15.

§ Lib. 3. Sect. 36. §. 133.

a sudden death: But supposing he had thus died, what Argument is this of a Punishment from God? A sudden death to a good Man is so far from being an Instance of the divine Displeasure, that 'tis rather a very desirable Circumstance, rather to be asked of God, than deprecated as a Judgment; not to add, that the Preservation of *Luther* for so many Years, from 1517, when he first began to preach against Indulgence, to the Year 1546, when he died, in Opposition to the Endeavours of his Enemies to destroy him, is a much stronger Proof that his Cause was owned, and he himself under the special Protection of God, than the pretended Suddenness of his Death, had it been Fact, could have been, that 'twas a Punishment inflicted on him by God, for his opposing the Usurpations, Idolatries, and Absurdities, of the Church of *Rome*.

Asto *Zuinglius*, 'tis acknowledged that he died in War, in Defence of the Religion and Liberties of his Country: And is such a Circumstance to his Dishonour, or an Argument of his falling a Sacrifice to the divine Vengeance, or of the badness of the Cause for which he fought? What then shall we say to *Josiah*, King of *Judah*, concerning whom the sacred Historian writes: *He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left* *. And yet this pious Prince was slain in War by *Necho* king of *Egypt*: But did this prove that the Superstitions of *Egypt* was the true Religion, in opposition to that which God himself had established amongst the *Jews*?

As to *Oecolampadius*, he died, as *Melchior Adams* informs us, in a very gentle and desirable Manner, not suddenly, but after fifteen Days illness, of an Ulcer upon the *Os Sacrum*; repeating from beginning to end the fifty first *Psalms*, a little before his death;

* 2Chron. xxx. iv. 2.

death; and with his last Breath crying out, *Lord Jesus save me*, in the Presence of ten of his Brethren, who agreed in this Account of him †.

As to *Caroloftadius*, the Story of his being killed by the Devil is ridiculous, and hath no Authority to support it; the Epistle of the Ministers of *Basil*, mentioned by the Cardinal, having never been produced, and being no where to be found. *Petrus Boquinus*, who was at the Funeral of *Caroloftadius*, hath exposed this vile Forgery; and tells us, that he died, amongst many others, of the Plague, which then cruelly raged in *Germany*, and at *Basil*, on *Christmas-day*; and that he was honourably attended to his Funeral by great Numbers of the Academy*.

As to *Calvin*, the Cardinal's whole Account is an impudent Imposture; and *Bolzec*, from whom he takes it, a Man neither of Morals or Credit sufficient to attest it. He bore an irreconcilable Hatred to *Calvin*, for having been imprisoned at *Geneva*, and banished from the Territories of it, upon Account of something he had delivered about Predestination. He was originally a *Carmelite* Friar, and turned Protestant and Physician, and afterwards returned to Popery again, and prostituted his Wife to the Canons of *Autun* in *Burgundy*: An admirable Witness of this infamous Story of *Calvin's* Death!

Beza, who was a Minister himself at *Geneva*, and administered the Sacrament to *Calvin* a little before his Death, tells us he was naturally of a thin consumptive Constitution, which he greatly impaired by long Abstinence, and indefatigable Study and Labour. He died of a Complication of Distempers, though the immediate Cause of it was an *Asthma*. A little before his Death, the *Syndicks* and *Senators* paid him a Visit, to whom he gave an affectionate

† Melchior. Adam. vit. Germ. Theolog. p. 57. Edit. Francof.

* Melchior Adami. p. 87.

affectionate [and christian Exhortation. The Month of *May*, in which he died, he spent almost in continual Prayer, with Eyes lift up to Heaven, when the *Asthma* had almost stopped his Voice; oftentimes repeating the Words of *David*, *I was silent, O Lord, because thou didst it.* May the 19th, he supped with his Brethren, the Ministers, and told them he should never more sit with them at Table; and from that Day, to the 27th of the same Month, when he died, he lay as one almost dead, and at last departed in the most gentle Manner, without almost a Sigh or Groan, retaining his Senses and Reason to the last: This is *Beza's* Account, who was with him almost continually in his Sickness, and at his Death, and is an abundant Confutation of the scandalous and vile Account of *Bolzec*, and *Bellarmino* from him. And, tho' any Man of Honour and Candour would have been ashamed to have retailed so impudent a Piece of Scandal; yet, to do the Cardinal Justice, nothing less could be expected from him, who lays it down as a certain Fact, *That no Catholicks are ever found to praise or approve the Doctrine, or Life, of Heathens or Hereticks* *.

But, supposing the Cardinal's Stories to have been all true; yet, if such unfortunate Deaths prove the Badness of the first Reformers Cause, How justly may the Argument be retorted on the Papists? How many of the very Heads of their Church have died sudden, violent, infamous Deaths? *Platina* tells us, that Pope *Leo V.* was deposed by *Christopher*, and died in Jayl thro' Grief; that *John XI.* was taken by the Soldiers and stifled to Death with a Bolster; that *John XIII.* a Wretch, who, from his Youth, had been addicted to the vilest Lusts, was taken and killed in the very Act of Adultery; that *Benedict VI.* was strangled or famished to Death in *St. Angelo's* Castle at *Rome*; that *John*

XXII. who promised himself a long Life, was crushed to Death by the Fall of a new Chamber at his Palace at *Viterbo*; with many other Instances of the like Nature, that might be mentioned, if such Kind of Arguments were any Thing to the Purpose. But I proceed to,

N O T E XV.

Which is the temporal Felicity, conferred by God on those, who have defended the church; for, says he, *catholick Princes have never heartily adhered to God, but they easily triumphed over their Enemies* †. And for the Proof of this he produces many Instances out of the Old Testament, of *Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David*, and others; and of *Constantine, Theodosius*, and others, under the New Testament Dispensation: But, that this is a very uncertain and fallacious Note, will appear by a little Consideration; for, if temporal Felicity be a Note of the true Church, it must be such a Note as is peculiar to, and inseparable from it, and as never doth or can agree to any false and antichristian Church whatsoever; for no Demonstration can be plainer than this, that if temporal Felicity oftentimes belongs to the false Church, it can never be a discriminating Note, or Mark of the true one.

Now, though *Moses*, and *David*, and other good Princes amongst the *Jews*, had very signal Successes from God; and, though an Adherence to true Religion and Virtue hath a Tendency to secure Princes and Nations the divine Protection and Blessing; yet, that good Princes have not been always successful against bad ones, is evident from the Instance before-mentioned of *Josiah*, who was slain by the idolatrous King of *Egypt*; and from the *Maccabees*,

† Felicitas temporalis, divinitus iis collata, qui ecclesiam defenderunt. Nunquam enim catholici principes ex animo Deo adhererunt, quin facillime de hostibus triumpharent.

cabees, of whom *Judas Maccabæus* was slain fighting against *Bacchides*, and his Army routed: *Jonathan*, his Brother, was treacherously seized and slain by *Tryphon*: *Simon*, his Brother, was traiterously murdered by *Ptolomy* his Son-in-law; whereas the Cardinal produces the *Maccabees*, as Instances to prove the temporal Prosperity of good Princes, and their Triumphs, by the Help of God, over their Enemies.

But, supposing no Instances could be produced of *Jewish* Princes, but what had been prosperous, were not the Kings of the *heathen* Nations altogether as successful? How often were the *Jews* themselves oppressed, beaten, enslaved, and carried into Captivity by them? What were the Successes of their most fortunate Princes in Comparison of those of *Tiglathphilesar*, *Salmanasar*, *Nebuchadonosor*, and others, to whom they were successively Tributaries and Subjects? Now, if temporal Felicity, Successes, Victories, Largeness of Empire, and Multitude of Riches, are Marks of the true Church, we must not look for the Church amongst the *Jews*, but amongst the *heathen* Nations and Princes, who could oftentimes boast of this Note, and possessed it in a much more remarkable Manner than the *Jewish* Princes and Nation ever did.

Besides, if temporal Felicity be a Mark of the Church, where was the Church of God in the Days of *Elijah*? *Ahab* was an idolatrous Prince, and a great Encourager of Idolatry in his Kingdom; and the *Jews* were so universally in the Kings Measures, that *Elijah* complains to God: *The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, and slain thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away* *. 'Tis true God tells him, *I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every*

* 1 Kings xix. 14.

every Mouth which hath not kissed him §. But they were oppressed; and persecuted, and had not one Mark of temporal Prosperity to prove them to be the Church of God.

Much less can such Prosperity be a discriminating Mark of the Christian Church. The Cardinal, elate with his own Purple, Titles, Emoluments, Splendor, and Riches, forgot, surely, the Circumstances and Doctrine of Jesus Christ; that he himself was despised and rejected of Men, and at last crucified and slain by wicked and ungodly Hands; and that he taught, that whosoever would become his Disciple, *must take up his cross and follow him.*

Nor had the Apostles of our Lord any Thing of the Glare of worldly Grandeur and Prosperity to attract the Eyes and allure the Hopes of Mankind: No, they *approved themselves the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, and distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, and in fastings **. And as to the Generality of those they converted, St. Paul tells the Corinthians: *Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish, weak, base, and despised things of the world, that no flesh should glory in his presence †.* And as to their Doctrine they taught, *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution ‡; and that we must, thro' much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God ††.*

And accordingly for three hundred Years, at least, the Christian Church had not much of this Mark of the Cardinal's belonging to her, but was exposed to, and harrassed by perpetual Persecution, when almost every Year produced new Confessors and Martyrs, and the very Name of a Christian was made

§ Id. Ver. 18.

‡ 2 Tim. iii. 12.

* 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5.

†† Acts xiv. 22.

† 1 Cor. i. 26, &c.

made criminal. How then can that be a discriminating Mark of the Church of Christ, which that Church wanted for three hundred Years? Or are the essential Marks of it altered since that Time? Protestants will expect some good Authority for this before they will easily believe it: Besides, what will become of this Note in the Days of Antichrist, when as the Cardinal allows, *such will be the Cruelty of the Persecution under him, as to hinder all the publick Exercises of true Religion* ††? If this be true, and yet if, as he affirms against *Sotus* ‡‡, that most cruel Persecution shall not wholly extinguish the Faith and Religion of Christ; then the true Church will and may subsist without temporal Prosperity, even in Circumstances of the most dreadful Persecution; and therefore, the Cardinal, as he begins his Notes with a mere Name, ends them with a manifest Contradiction, affirming temporal Prosperity to be a distinguishing Note of the true Church, when, at the same Time, he allows it can and will subsist without it.

As to all the Instances he brings of the Prosperity of Christian Princes, they are nothing to the Purpose; since it may be easily proved, that Catholick Princes have often come to violent Ends, and been very unfortunate in their Wars. *Henry III.* and *IV.* of *France*, were both murdered by Assassins: *Mary*, Queen of *Scotland*, lost her Head upon the Block: And *James* the Second of *England*, a Zealot for *Poper*y, was forced to abdicate his Crown, and died in Exile: How many Victories have been gained over Christian Princes by the *Turks*? How many by Protestant Hereticks over Catholick Kings? Queen *Elizabeth*, an heretical Queen, triumphed over the invincible *Armada*, and baffled all the Power of *Spain*, and had a glorious Reign of above forty four Years Continuance: *Lewis XIV.* of *France*, that most Christi-

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†† De Rom. Pont. l. 3. c. 4.

‡‡ Id. Ibid. c. 17.

an King, had his Armies often defeated, and all his Laurels taken from him; and might have been deprived of his Kingdom too by an heretical General, had it not been for the Treachery of faithless Men, who betrayed their Country, and were hastily introducing a Popish Pretender. *Italy* it self, the Seat of the Beast, is at this Day the Seat of War; and Catholick Princes are devouring each other, whilst the chief Protestant Powers are looking on at a Distance, and their Subjects enjoying the Blessings of Peace and Plenty. So fallacious is this Argument of temporal Felicity, and so little conclusive for the Cause of him that brings it. And thus have I gone through these fifteen Notes; and shewn you that many of them are impertinent and false, and no Notes at all of the Church of Christ; and that those of them that are good, do not belong to the Church of *Rome*: So that, as she hath no true Marks of the Church of Christ belonging to her, she ought to be esteemed and avoided by all as an antichristian Church.

And truly she hath the Marks of such a Church evidently belonging to her. Had *St. Paul* been Witness to the Insolence and Impiety of the Popes, those Heads of the Church of *Rome*, he could not have given a more exact Description of them, than he hath done in *the man of sin, and son of perdition*.*

1. He opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped, *2 Thess. ii. 4.*

2. He sitteth as God, in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God, *Ibid.*

3. His coming is after the working of Satan, with Power, and Signs, and lying Wonders, and all Deceivableness of Unrighteousness, *Ver. 9, 10.*

4. The Seat of this Beast is mytical *Babylon*, *Rev. xviii. 5.* that great City,

5. Which hath seven Heads or Mountains, *Rev. xvii. 9.*

6. In

* *2 Thess. ii. 3, &c.*

6. In which dwells the Woman, that great Whore, which is arrayed in purple, and scarlet Colour, and decked with Gold and precious Stones and Pearls, *Ver. 4.*

7. That sits upon a scarlet coloured Beast, full of Names of Blasphemy, *ver. 3.* Such as, *Lord God, Most Holy Father; Optimus; Maximus, Greatest and Best.*

8. That reigneth over the Kings of the Earth, *Rev. xvii. 18.*

9. That sits upon many Waters, which are the People, Multitudes, and Nations, and Tongues, that she hath bewitched with her Idolatries, *Ver. 15.*

10. Which hath gotten drunk with the Blood of the Saints, and with the Blood of the Martyrs of Jesus, *Ver. 6.*

11. Upon her forehead this name is written, MYSTERY, *Rev. xvii. 5.* Transubstantiation.

12. The Merchants of the Earth have waxed rich through the abundance of her Delicacies, *Rev. xviii. 3.* by the Sales of Indulgences, Masses, Relicks, *agnus Dei's*, and the like Merchandize of the Priests of *Rome.*

13. She deals in Slaves and Souls of Men, *Ver. 13.*

14. She teaches Doctrines of Devils, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from Meats which God hath created to be received with Thanksgiving, *1 Tim. iv. 1, &c.* And,

15. She hath beguiled Men by a voluntary Humility; and hath introduced and established the Worship of Angels, *Colos. ii. 18.* and the honouring *Mahuzzims*, *i. e.* the souls of dead Men, with Gold, and Silver, and precious Stones, and valuable things, by the Invocation of Saints, Veneration of their Relicks and Images, both which are adorned in the Church of *Rome* in the most sumptuous and costly Manner.

These fifteen Notes I would oppose to the Cardinal's, and I, in my Conscience, think they every one belong to the Church of *Rome*: And as these are evidently the Marks of Antichrist, of that Beast which it was prophesied should ascend out of the bottomless Pit, let us all take heed how we worship or receive her Mark: *For, if any man worship the beast, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation.** And when we think of the Souls of those which she hath slain for the word of God, and the testimony which they held, let us, in Abhorrence of this Impiety and Cruelty, cry out: HOW LONG, O LORD, HOLY AND TRUE, DOST THOU NOT JUDGE AND AVENGE THEIR BLOOD, ON THEM THAT DWELL ON THE EARTH!

Adhere therefore, my Brethren, to the Protestant Religion, I mean the Religion of the New Testament, which contains the whole of the Christian Scheme, and is your surest Guide to Salvation and Happiness. If, indeed, you are in love with Slavery, and would have lordly Priests tyrannize over your Consciences, your Persons, and Estates; if you choose Ignorance instead of Knowledge, Superstition and Idolatry instead of pure and acceptable Religion, and regard more the Inventions of Men than the Commands of God, Popery is the Religion ready for your Acceptance: But, if you love your God, your Redeemer, your Souls, your Bodies, your Children, your Estates, and Country, Popery must be your Abhorrence, which is a Religion only fit for Slaves and Fools; who have sacrificed all the valuable Interests of Mankind, or have not Sense sufficiently to prize them. Be thankful to God therefore for the Privileges you enjoy; educate your Children firmly in the Principles

* Rev. xiv. 10.

ples of civil and religious Liberty. Walk worthy your Obligations and Privileges, that God may not be provoked to withdraw his Protection from you, nor to give you up into the Hands of Men, who where ever they prevail bring Ruin and Slavery, Inquisitions and Tortures with them; and whose true Character it is, **THAT THEIR TENDER MERCIES ARE CRUELITIES.**

*The Supremacy of St. PETER and the
Bishops of Rome his Successors :
Considered.*

I N A

S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D A T

Salters-Hall, Jan. 23, 1734-5.

By DANIEL NEAL, M.A.

MATT. XVI. 18, 19.

18. *And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

19. *And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.*

WHEN the Christian Religion was first preached among the Gentiles, it prevailed by its own divine Excellence and Purity; but in Process of Time, the Ambition and Avarice of Men deformed its native Beauty,

Beauty, and weakened its Influence, by blending it with worldly Power, till by Degrees the spiritual Kingdom of Christ, which consists in Righteousness and Peace, was changed into a temporal Monarchy over the Bodies and Souls of Men under one Sovereign Pontiff, who arrogated the Title of *Successor of St. Peter* and *Vicar-General of Christ upon Earth*.

When the *Roman* Empire became Christian, the EMPERORS assumed the supreme Power in ecclesiastical Affairs, and maintained it some hundreds of Years. * They confirmed the Elections of Bishops, called Councils, and established their Canons by an imperial Edict: They appointed Judges for religious Causes, and deposed Bishops that were lapsed into Heresy. *Eusebius* therefore, in the Life of *Constantine*, calls him *κοίνος ἐπίσκοπος*, the general Bishop, or Director of all things relating to the external Polity of the Church. But when the Empire was divided and broken, by the Irruption of the barbarous Nations, the Bishop of *Rome* started his Claim to a Primacy of Jurisdiction over all Christian Bishops; and taking Advantage of the Distractions of the Empire, entirely threw off the imperial Yoke, about the IXth or Xth Century, and assumed an absolute Authority, not only over the Clergy, but over Kings and Emperors, and the whole Christian World, in all Causes civil and ecclesiastical. Some Ages after, there was a fierce Contest about the Supremacy of the Pope over the whole collective Body of the Church. † And tho' this Point was not absolutely determined in the Council of *Trent*, *Bellarmino*, the celebrated *Romish* Champion, and his Followers, have declared it unlawful to appeal from the Sentence of the Pope to any future general Council.

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* *Spanh. Ec. Hist. p. 1102.*

† *Sec. xv.*

'Tis a vast and boundless Empire of Superstition and Slavery that is formed upon this Usurpation; Persons of all Ranks are bound to believe whatever the Pope decrees, and to obey all his *bulls* on Pain of Damnation. If sovereign Princes dare resist him, or refuse Obedience to his arbitrary and imperious Dictates, the Trumpet is sounded to Sedition, Subjects are absolved from their Allegiance, and commanded to bind their Kings in chains, and their Nobles in Fetters of Iron. If his Holiness is pleased to interdict whole Kingdoms, the publick Worship of God must cease, and their Temples be shut up till they return to their Duty ---- Vast Contributions have been raised, and immense Sums paid annually into the Pope's Coffers, by *Peter's-pence*, the *first Fruits* and *Tenths* of the Clergy, the Sale of *Indulgences*, *Agnus Dei's*, and other holy Wares of the like Kind, for the Support of his unrighteous Dominion. It was usual in *England*, before the Reformation, to levy a *tenth*, and sometimes a *fifth* of all ecclesiastical Livings, for the Service of the Church, or some Expedition into the Holy Land, which considering the vast Number of Religious Houses in those times, produced an incredible Revenue. Upon a computation, made by order of King *Henry III.* in the Year 1245, it appeared, that more Money was carried out of *England* annually by the Pope's Authority, than all the Revenues of the Crown put together.

* And without doubt, the whole Riches of the Nation had been conveyed away thro' this Channel, beyond Recovery, had not the Statutes of *Provisors* and *Premunire* taken place.---- Fierce and bloody Wars have been kindled in the Christian World by his Direction, not to mention the more compendious Ways of dispatching Hereticks by Poison or murdering now and then an hundred thousand in cold Blood, as in the Massacres of *Ireland*, *Paris*, and the Valleys of *Piedmont*. Our Nation has been a remarkable
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Example of all these in their Turns. Never did Popery triumph with less Controul in all its false and bloody Colours, than in this Island for several hundred Years. And when the all-wise Providence of God raised up those glorious Instruments of the Reformation, who delivered us from such barefaced Usurpation, our holy Mother the Church became as merciless as she had been tyrannical and insatiable, and in the Greatness of her Charity excommunicated our Rulers, dissolved the Government, and doomed our Fore-fathers, with all their Posterity, to temporal Misery, and eternal Perdition.

How monstrous and groundless soever this Empire may appear, it has had the most publick and solemn Sanctions of their Church.

In the *Lateran* Council it was decreed, “ That
 “ the *Roman* High-Priest holds a Primacy over
 “ the universal Church, as Successor of *St. Peter*,
 “ Prince of the Apostles; that he is the true Lieu-
 “ tenant of Christ, and Head of the Church; the
 “ Father and Doctor of all Christians, to whom
 “ all Power is committed to feed, direct, and go-
 “ vern the Catholick Church under Christ.” Hence
 he claims the sole Right of defining Points of
 Doctrine, and deciding Controversies of Faith,
 without Liberty of Appeal, even to a general
 Council; and of binding and loosing, opening and
 shutting the Gates of Heaven at his Pleasure. To
 secure these Powers, with many others of the like
 extravagant Nature, he exacts the most solemn
 Oaths from his Clergy, and particularly from the
 Bishops, who swear, “ To be faithful and obedi-
 “ ent to *St. Peter*, and to the holy *Roman* Church,
 “ and our Lord the Pope his Successor, to receive
 “ and execute all his Commands, to discover all
 “ Plots and Conspiracies against him, to preserve
 “ and defend the Royalties of *St. Peter* to the ut-
 “ most of their Power, and to persecute and op-
 “ pose all Hereticks, Schismatics, and Rebels
 “ to

“ to our said sovereign Lord the Pope, or his Successors.” * So that all Clergymen of the Church of *Rome*, not born within the Verge of the ecclesiastical State, are Subjects of a foreign Power, and bound by the most sacred Ties to lay violent Hands on all who profess a Religion different from their own. ---- Nor is less care taken to secure the Allegiance of the Lay-converts, who upon their Reception into the *Romish* Communion, are obliged to make the following solemn Profession of their Faith: “ I acknowledge the holy, catholick, apostolick *Roman* Church, for the Mother and Mistress of all Churches, and I promise true Obedience to the Bishop of *Rome*, Successor to St. *Peter*, Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Jesus Christ; and I do undoubtedly receive and profess all other things defined and declared by the sacred Canons, general Councils, and particularly the Council of *Trent*, and I do anathematize all things contrary thereunto, and all Heresies which the Church has condemned, rejected, and anathematized.”

This is the current Doctrine of the *Roman* Church, which no Man can reject without being reputed an Enemy to the apostolick See, and is esteemed of such Importance, that Pope *Boniface VIII.* in one of his Decrees has declared and pronounced it of *Necessity to Salvation*: Cardinal *Belarmine* says, the Doctrine of the Supremacy is a *fundamental Article* of their Church: And we must concur with them in allowing this to be the Basis of the whole Controversy, and if well established, that their Church is built upon a *Rock*; but if it stands condemned by the concurrent Testimony of Scripture, Antiquity, and Reason, the Foundations of Popery are blown up, and the unwieldy Fabrick falls to Pieces.

Let

* *Spanh. Ecc. Hist. p. 1830.*

Let us therefore consider, *First*, the Evidence by which this extravagant Claim is supported :

And then, the Arguments that are brought to encounter it.

First, *We are to consider the evidence which the Papists produce to support the above-mentioned supremacy.* Had our Lord appointed a Vicar-general on Earth, we might expect to meet not only with his Name in Scripture, but with the time and manner of his Instalment, and with the deed of Conveyance to his Successors, in the most plain and significant Words; or at least that it should be read in every Page of Antiquity: But if the most antient Fathers of the Church consent in any thing, it is in a general Silence about this Matter: The whole stress of the Evidence is therefore laid upon the following obscure and metaphorical Passages of Scripture.

The principal of which is in the first Verse of my Text; *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.* Here they argue (in their late Profession of Faith for the Reception of Converts into the Church) “ from the very Name of *Peter*, “ or *Cephas*, which signifies a *Rock*; which Name “ our Lord, who does nothing without Reason, “ gave to him who before was called *Simon*, to “ signify that he should be as a *Rock* or *Foundation* “ upon which he would build his Church.” But some learned Men interpret the *Rock*, of the Confession of *Peter's* Faith, mentioned a Verse or two before, where our Lord having asked his Disciples, whom Men said he was, addresses to his Apostles; *Whom say ye that I am? Simon Peter* answered and said, *Thou art Christ the Son of the living God.* Whereupon, after a Commendation of his Faith, our Lord replies, v. 16. *I say also unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon THIS ROCK, that is, upon the confession thou hast made of me, I will build my church.* This Interpretation is countenanced by many Doc-

tors and Fathers of the antient Church. St. *Chrysostome*, in his Comment upon the Place, says, Upon the Rock, that is, upon *the faith of Peter's confession*, I will build my Church. And again, He did not build the Church upon the *Man Peter*, but upon his *Faith* *. *Theodoret*, St. *Austin*, and some of the Popish Writers themselves, are of this Mind †.

But admitting, with St. *Cyprian* and others, *Peter* himself was the *Rock*, What Resemblance is there between a *Rock* and a *Governor*? At least, What Assurance can we have, that the Metaphor precisely imports this Sense, when it may as fairly be interpreted to another? The *Rock* of the Church may signify its *Foundation* or *Beginning*, and thus it may have a particular Respect to St. *Peter*, who laid the Foundation of the first Christian Church at *Jerusalem*, by his excellent Sermon, *Acts* 2d, ‡ and made the first Gentile Converts in *Cæsarea*, according to the Instructions he received afterwards, by a Vision from Heaven. ** And this was all the Honour he claimed, when standing up in the Council at *Jerusalem*, he said, *Men and brethren, ye know that a good while ago God chose me out among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word.* †† But in this Work St. *Peter* could have no Successor, because that would be in Effect to say, the Foundations of the Christian Church were not yet laid, which was fully accomplished above sixteen hundred Years ago.

But if by the *Rock* we are to understand the Foundation upon which *the Church's Faith is built*, it can have no particular Reference to St. *Peter*, because the Scripture represents our Lord himself
as

* *Chrysost.* in John i. 50.

† More Testimonies to this Purpose may be seen in Dr. *Barrow's* learned Treatise on the Supremacy, p. 56, &c.

‡ Vid. *Whitby* in loc.

** Acts x. 9, &c.

†† Acts xv. 7.

as the Foundation and Corner Stone of his Church : *The stone which the builders refused* (says the Psalmist) *the same is become the head of the corner.* * Which Passage our Saviour applies to himself, *Matt. xxi. 42.* And it is an Honour in which he will not be rival'd, for *other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, even Jesus Christ.* † But next under him, the twelve Apostles are the Foundations and Pillars of the Christian Church, who were equally commissioned to preach the Gospel to all Nations, and furnished with extraordinary Abilities and Powers for that Purpose : *Ye are built* (says St. Paul to the Ephesians) *upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, i. e. upon their Doctrine, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.* ‡ Here is no particular Mention of St. Peter, which one might reasonably have expected, had he been Prince of the Apostles. *You say the Church is founded on Peter,* (says St. Hierom) *but the same is built upon all the Apostles. The twelve Apostles were the immutable Pillars of Orthodoxy) the Rock of the Church* (saith another antient Author. And St. Basil adds, *That Peter was but one of the Mountains upon which the Lord did promise to build his Church* ** This is the Language of all Antiquity ; and whatever Rank Peter might hold among the Apostles, or what peculiar Regards he might claim from his Countrymen the Jews, as the *Apostle of the Circumcision*, it is certain he did not equal the Apostle Paul among the Gentiles : St. Paul was properly their Apostle, and he glories in it ; *I am the Apostle of the Gentiles* (says he) *and Grace was given me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles :* †† In this Province he laboured more abundantly than the rest, ‡‡ and with greater Success, striving to preach the Gospel where

* Psal. cxviii. 20.

† 1 Cor. iii. 11.

‡ Eph. xi. 30.

** Vid. Barrow, p. 58.

†† Rom. xi. 13,

‡‡ Rom. xv. 20.

where Christ had not been named, lest he should build upon another's Foundation; on which Account he certainly deserves the highest Honours.

But if after all, the Papists will build their Church upon the *Supremacy of St. Peter*, let them remember that upon this very *Rock* it has once split; the *Supremacy* being the first Point of Controversy that made Way for the Reformation. This cut off the *British* Islands from that idolatrous Communion, and seems to make a Reconciliation impracticable. Had this been given up, *England* and *Rome* had been united more than once since that Time; but this keeps her Wounds open, and is, in my humble Opinion, that Stone of stumbling, and Rock of Offence, which will one Time or other fall upon her, and grind her to Powder.

The second Passage to support the Supremacy of *St. Peter* follows in the latter Part of my Text; *And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* “Where (says the late Catechism) under the Figure of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, our Lord ensured to *Peter* the chief Authority in his Church; as when a King gives to one of his Officers the Keys of a City, he thereby declares that he makes him Governor of that City.” Are the Keys then the Ensigns of supreme Authority? The *Scribes* and *Pharisees* had them in our Saviour's Time, and yet were subject to the High-priest; and 'tis no unusual Thing for Masters of Families to entrust their Keys with Servants without authorising them to dispose of their Treasure. The plain Meaning of the Passage is this: The *Kingdom of Heaven* is the Kingdom of the Messiah, and the *Keys* are *St. Peter's* Commission to open the Gates of it to the *Gentiles*. It follows, *whatsoever ye shall bind on earth,*

*earth, shall be bound in heaven; that is, whatever you shall declare to be forbidden under Pain of my Displeasure, shall render the Offender obnoxious to my Wrath; and whatsoever Things ye shall loose on Earth, tho' once required by the Law of Moses, Men shall be allowed to do them without incurring my Displeasure. But whatever is meant by this Grant, nothing was peculiarly promised to St. Peter, because in other Places it is given in common to all the Apostles, Matth. xviii. 18. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever YE shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever YE shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. Again, when our Lord appeared to his Apostles after his Resurrection, he breathed upon them, and said, Receive ye the holy Ghost; as the Father has sent me, even so I send you; whosesoever sins YE remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins YE retain, they are retained.** The Apostles had the discerning of Spirits, and the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost to direct their Judgments in the Exercise of their extraordinary Powers; and if his *Holiness of Rome* can convince the World, he is possessed of the same infallible Spirit, I think all Mankind should kiss his Slipper, and apply to him in the most humble Manner, for an Admission into the Kingdom of Heaven.

A third Passage insisted upon by the Advocates for St. Peter's Supremacy is *Luke xxii. 31, 32. The Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan has desired to have thee, that he might winnow thee as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.* In which Text (say the *Romanists*) "our Lord not only declared his particular Concern for *Peter*, in praying that his Faith might not fail, but also committed to him the Care of his Brethren, the other Apostles, in charging him to confirm and strengthen

“strengthen them.” The Words have a manifest Reference to *St. Peter’s* Denial of his Master in the High-priest’s Hall, when his Faith was in such Danger of failing, that if our Lord had not looked upon him, it might never have recovered; but when he should be restored, he exhorts him to confirm and strengthen his Brethren, who, not being able to abide the like Trial, forsook their Master and fled, when he was apprehended in the Garden. What relation this can have to *St. Peter’s* Supremacy over the rest of the Apostles, or to the pretended Jurisdiction of his Successors over the whole Christian World, is hard to discover. The primitive Christians encouraged each other to suffer Martyrdom; and the Confessors and Martyrs in *Queen Mary’s* Days strengthened and confirmed their Brethren in Prison, by Conference, by Exhortations and Prayers, without claiming an Authority over their Faith. Men must be reduced to very great Extremities, when they build so weighty a Fabrick upon so slender a Foundation.

The last Passage of Scripture insisted on is *John* xxi. 15, 16, 17. where our Lord, in Allusion to *Peter’s* having denied him thrice, commands him three Times *to feed his lambs and his sheep*. In which Text (says the late Catechism) “our Lord in a
 “most solemn Manner thrice committed to *St. Peter* the Care of his whole Flock, of all his
 “Sheep without Exception, that is, of the whole
 “Church.” Who could imagine unlimited Sovereignty could be contained in this harmless Precept! And what is there in it peculiar to *Peter*? Was not the same Commission given to all the Apostles, when they were commanded to teach all Nations? And is not the like Charge given to every Bishop or Pastor of the Church? When the Apostle *Paul* took Leave of the Elders of *Ephesus*, he commanded them to take Heed of the Flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them Overseers *to feed*

*feed the church of God,** which he had purchased with his Blood; and St. Peter, in one of his Catholick Epistles to the Strangers that were scattered abroad thro' *Pontus, Galatia and Cappadocia*, exhorts the *elders among them to feed their several flocks*; taking the Oversight of them not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind.

This is the whole Evidence by which this important Doctrine is supported. If then it should be admitted, St. Peter was *One of the chief of the Apostles*, as being the Eldest and First in Order; and that he stood high in the Esteem of our Lord; on Account of his Courage and Boldness in his Cause; yet it does not appear from the Texts above-mention'd, or any other, that an *Authority* was given him over the rest of the Apostles; much less that he was constituted Head of the universal Church, and Vicar-general of Christ upon Earth.

We proceed, in the *second place*, to produce the Arguments from Scripture and Antiquity, which demonstrate the Falseness of this Claim.

And first, *There is not the least mention of such an officer in scripture.* If Peter had been appointed Primate of the Apostles, with Jurisdiction over the whole Christian Church, is it consistent with the Wisdom and Goodness of God not to mention it in express Words, especially if the Knowledge of it is of the utmost importance to the very Being of Christianity, and the eternal Happiness of Mankind? But is any thing like this recorded in the whole New Testament? Surely St. Paul must have been guilty of a very great Omission, when he was enumerating the several Officers of the Christian Church, not to mention the CHIEF: For he says no more, than that our Lord gave *some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors*
K and

* Acts xx. 28.

*and teachers.** And more exprelly in his Epistle to the *Corinthians*; *God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, and after that miracles and gifts.* † If our Lord had constituted a supreme Head, should it not rather have been, he hath set some in the Church; first, a *Pope*; secondarily, *apostles*; thirdly, *prophets*; and then *pastors and teachers*? But *St. Paul* knew no such Officer.

Secondly, *Our Lord himself has frequently declared against a superiority among his apostles.* When there was a strife among them who should be greatest, he presently puts an end to it, not by naming the Person, but by assuring them he intended no such Thing. *The kings of the earth exercise lordship over their subjects; but ye shall not be so; but he that is greater, (i. e. in Gifts or Knowledge) let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that does serve.* ‡ When two of the Apostles, *James and John*, affected a Pre-eminence above the rest, by desiring to sit, one at our Lord's right Hand, and the other at his left in his Kingdom, he rejected their Suit, and check'd their Ambition, § by telling them they knew not what they asked; and *when the other ten heard it, they were moved with indignation.* ** At another time, when a Dispute arose among them who should be greatest, as soon as our Lord heard of it, *he sat down and called the twelve, and said unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.* †† And in his Sermon against the *Pharisees*, he says unto his Disciples, *Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.* ‡‡

Thirdly, *Neither did the Apostles after our Lord's ascension into heaven admit it.* There is no Instance in the new Testament of *St. Peter's* setting himself up

* Ephes. iv. 8, 11.

‡ Luke xxii. 24.

†† Mark ix. 35.

† 1 Cor. xii. 28.

§ Mark x. 37, 38.

** Mat. xx. 24.

‡‡ Matth. xxiii. 8.

up for head of the Church, or laying his Commands on the rest of the Apostles, but rather the contrary. When the Apostles at *Jerusalem* heard that the People at *Samaria* had received the Word, *they sent Peter and John* * to pray for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost; who, in Obedience to their Orders, readily undertook the Journey, and discharged their Trust. Nor did *Paul* and *Barnabas* appeal to St. *Peter* in the Controversies that arose between them about the necessity of Circumcision; but referr'd the question to all the Apostles and Elders at *Jerusalem*, who when they had consider'd it, return'd an Answer, † not in the Name of PETER, by *divine appointment prince of the apostles, and lieutenant-general of Christ upon earth*; but in the common Name of the Apostles, Elders, and Brethren. ‡ Nor does St. *Peter* in his Writings affect an Authority over his Brethren; there is nothing of the Style or Spirit of a sovereign Pontiff in his Catholick Epistles, but the softest and most condescending Language, like one that would be thought to be least of the Apostles rather than the greatest. *The elders that are among you I exhort, who also am an ELDER, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.* § And tho' St. *Paul* was born out of due Time, and did not see our Lord in the Flesh, yet *in nothing was he behind the very CHIEF of the apostles*; ** and with

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regard

* Acts viii. 14.

† Acts xv. 2, 23.

‡ The Fathers in express Terms assert all the Apostles to be co-ordinate in Power and Authority. St. *Cyprian* says, *Hoc erant utique & ceteri apostoli quod fuit Petrus, pari consortio præditi & honoris & potestatis.* The other Apostles were, that which Peter was, invested with an Equality of Honour and Power. St. *Chrysostom* says, that St. *Paul* sheweth that each Apostle did enjoy equal Dignity. in Gal. ii. 8. and comparing St. *Paul* to St. *Peter*, he calls St. *Paul*, ἰσότημον αὐτῷ, equal in Honour to him; adding, πλείον γὰρ ἔδεν ἔρω τέως, for I will not as yet say any more, in Gal. i. 8. St. *Cyril*, *Hierom*, *Dionysius*, *Isidore*, and all the Fathers of the three first Centuries use the same Language.

§ 1 Pet. v. 1.

** Gal. ii. 11.

regard to *St. Peter*, he withstood him to the face; which is more than the stoutest Cardinal would venture to do, to his pretended Successor at *Rome*. But,

Fourthly, *It does not appear that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome*. I will not affirm, with some learned Criticks, that *St. Peter* never was there, but it is more than probable he was not their Bishop. *Baronius* and other Popish Writers affirm, that *St. Peter* became Bishop of *Rome* in the second Year of *Claudius Cæsar*, *A. C.* XLII, and sat in the episcopal Chair 25 Years. And the late Catechism says, “He translated his Chair from *Antioch* to *Rome*, and “died Bishop of that City.” But they do not tell us how he became so; whether our Lord appointed him their Bishop, or the Apostles ordained him, or the People elected him, or he thrust himself into the Office. Nor is there any Account of it in Scripture, or the antient Fathers. We read in the New Testament of *St. Peter*’s being at *Jerusalem*, at *Antioch*, at *Babylon*, and at *Corinth*, but not once of his being at * *Rome*, unless *Babylon* stands for that City, which the *Romanists* are not willing to admit upon other Occasions. We are told of his Travels thro’ *Cappadocia*, *Sicilia*, *Pontus* and *Bythinia*, and most Parts of *Asia*; and yet, according to *St. Luke*, the chief of his famous Acts were done in *Palestine*. So that if he was Bishop of *Rome*, it must be allowed that for the most Part he was a *non-resident*. But is it possible to suppose that *St. Peter* resided at *Rome* as Bishop of that City, and that *St. Paul* in his Epistle to the *Romans*, written fifteen Years after his supposed Translation, should not salute him among the rest of the Brethren, whose Names he mentions in the sixteenth Chapter? Nor in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, *Ephesians*, *Philippians*, *Colossians*, and second to *Timothy*, all written from *Rome*, where he lived two whole Years in his own hired House; not
once

* *Vid.* *Spanheim*, p. 536, 537.

once send his Salutation among others to the several Churches? He was certainly not at *Rome*, when St. *Paul* writing from that City to the *Colossians*, says that *Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Marcus* and *Justus* were alone his fellow-labourers, which had been a comfort to him;* nor when St. *Paul* made his first Defence before *Cæsar*, and said, *That no man stood with him, but all Men forsook him*; No, nor at his second appearing before *Nero*, when the time of his departure was at hand; † for having sent the Salutations of all the Brethren to *Timothy*, and particularly of *Eubulus, Pudens, Linus* and *Claudia*, he takes no Notice of *Peter*; which is unpardonable, if he was then Bishop of the City. The Writers of the first Age are also silent upon this Head. Many Legends and fabulous Reports were raised of St. *Peter* after his Death; but (says the learned *Joseph Scaliger*) from the End of the *Acts* of the Apostles to the Time of *Pliny* the younger, (who lived under the Emperor *Trajan*) there is nothing certain in the History of the Church.

Besides, 'tis hardly credible that St. *Peter*, being the chief Apostle, and a general Officer in the Church, should condescend to become Bishop of a single City, and is as great a Disparagement to his Character, as if the General of an Army should lay down his Commission to become Captain of a private Company; for the two Offices are hardly consistent in one Person. The Apostles were commissioned to preach the Gospel in all Nations, but a Bishop is to reside in his Diocese, and feed the particular Flock committed to his Charge. If then St. *Peter* was an Apostle, he could not perform the Duty of a Bishop by residing in one City or Neighbourhood; and if he was a Bishop, he could not discharge the Office of an Apostle by travelling into distant Countries. So that here is a Failure in the Foundation; for, if

* Col. iv. 11.

† 2 Tim. iv. 16, 21.

St. *Peter* was not *Bishop* of *Rome*, 'tis impossible the present Pope should be his Successor. But,

Fifthly, *If we should admit that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome, the Grant of the Supremacy might be only personal, and terminate with himself.* For it is agreed on both Sides, that the Scripture makes no Mention of *Peter's* Successors; and we all know the apostolical Office did not descend to after Ages. The Catechism says, “ that it is evident by the unanimous Consent of the Fathers, and the Tradition of the Church in all Ages, that the Commission given to *St. Peter* descended to the Popes or Bishops of *Rome*.” But I may venture to challenge all that is between this and *Rome* to prove such Consent; the Fathers never dream'd of an universal Monarch over the whole Church, and are entirely silent about it; but if they were not, neither their Authority, nor the dark and obscure Tradition of later Ages ought to avail against Scripture and Reason. Does it follow, because Christ said to *Peter*, *upon this rock I will build my church*, that therefore he meant it of his Successors; when there is no Intimation of an Entail throughout the whole New Testament, nor any Communication of his apostolical Gifts? Besides, if *St. Peter* was Bishop of *Antioch* seven Years before his pretended Translation to *Rome*, why should not his Successors in that See have the better Claim? For the Story of his Translation by a special Command from Christ, is an exploded Fable; but none of the Bishops as yet put in their Claim to the Supremacy. When the Empire became Christian, the Bishops of the chief Cities claimed the first Rank among their Brethren, but *His Holiness* of *Rome* had no higher Title than *Dominus frater*, and *Comminister*, a Brother and Fellow-Servant, for several Ages. Pope Gregory I. who lived six hundred Years after Christ, * abhorred the Title of *Oecumenical* or *universal Bishop*, calling

* Spanh. p. 1088.

calling it a diabolical Usurpation, and the Forerunner of Antichrist; and he gives these Reasons for it in his Epistles, because it was never given to St. *Peter*; because none of the Bishops of *Rome* till that Time had assumed it; because it was contrary to the Canons, to the Decrees of the Fathers, and an Affront to Almighty God himself. The Bishop of *Rome* then did not presume to call Councils by his own sovereign Authority, nor sit as Judge in Controversies of Faith, much less to depose sovereign Princes; nay, he had not so much as a casting Voice, nor so small a Preference as to sign the *Canons* always in the first Place. The four first general Councils were convened by the express Command of the *Roman* Emperors, who presided in Person, or by their Deputies; but the Pope's Supremacy was not thought of for above 500 Years after Christ, nor obtained after many Struggles till almost a thousand.

Sixthly, If we should grant for Argument's Sake, that the Supremacy descended to St. *Peter's* Successors in the See of *Rome*, we shall find it almost impossible to derive the Succession in an uninterrupted Line through the several Ages of the Church. And yet the Popish Catechism says, that "those only who can derive their Lineage from the Apostles are the Heirs of the Apostles, and consequently they alone can claim a Right to the Scriptures, to the Administration of the Sacraments, or any Share in the pastoral Office; it is their proper Inheritance which they have received from the Apostles, and the Apostles from Christ." Let us therefore examine this Line, upon which the Validity of all Christian Administrations depends; if this should fail or be interrupted, the whole Christian Church is lost, for nobody can then claim a Right to the Scriptures or any Part of the pastoral Office.

Now the Successors of *St. Peter* should certainly be good Men, and endued with an apostolick Spirit. *A bishop* (says the Apostle) *must be blameless, vigilant, sober, and of good behaviour, not given to wine or filthy lucre.** But has this been the general Character of the *Roman Pontiffs*? Have not some been reputed Magicians and Necromancers, † and others undoubted Monsters of Iniquity? Witness the *Alexanders*, the *Hildebrands*, the *Gregorys*, the *Bonifaces*, whose lewd and flagitious Lives are hardly to be parallel'd in History. *Baronius* their own Historian confesses, that for a Succession of 50 Popes, not one pious or virtuous Man sat in the Chair; some were advanced to the papal Dignity at 10 or 12 Years of Age; others have been Murderers and Whoremongers, not to mention the Accounts in History of a female Pope. Are these the Heirs of *St. Peter*, and Vicars of Christ upon Earth? Can the apostolical or sacerdotal character be convey'd thro' such impure Canals? How prophane was that Saying of Pope *Leo X.* *Quàm lucrosa nobis est fabula Christi!* ‡ *What a rare Market have we made of this Fable of Jesus Christ!* “ And indeed (says Archbishop *Tillotson* §) there “ is not a more compendious Way of persuading “ Men that the Christian Religion is a Fable, “ than to set up a lewd and vicious Man as the “ Oracle of it.”

The Successors of *St. Peter* should be found in the Faith, because our Lord hath pray'd that their Faith should not fail. And yet, notwithstanding their confident Pretences to Infallibility, several Bishops of *Rome* have been condemned and deposed for Heresy, || their own general Councils being Judges. But if the Writings of the New Testament be the Standard of Orthodoxy, what a monstrous

* 1 Tim. iii. 2. † Acts & Mon. V. I. p. 675.

‡ Spanh. p. 1891. § V. II. p. 251.

|| Pope *John XXIII.* and others.

strous Train of Doctrines have they introduced contrary to, and subversive of the Faith once delivered to the Saints! ---- But I forbear descending to Particulars, lest I should encroach on the Province of my worthy Brother who next succeeds me, and who is much more equal to the Service.

Further, the true Successors of St. Peter should be *chosen by the proper Persons, and in a disinterested Manner*. In antient Time the Clergy and People of Rome elected their own Bishops, the Order of Cardinals not being known in the Christian Church for almost a thousand Years; nor were they the sole Electors, till the Constitutions of Pope Gregory X, * above 1200 Years after Christ. But supposing the Choice to be in them, let us view the Conclave and observe whether the Holy Ghost sits on every Head and directs every Vote. Is there no criminal Ambition? No Bribery and Corruption? Are there no simoniacal Practices? Do not the Interests of the several Potentates of Europe govern the Ballot as much or more than the exemplary Piety and Capacity of the Candidates? If the World is not very uncharitable, the Intrigues of the Conclave exceed the most refined Policy of all the Courts of Europe together. ---- Blessed Jesus! Are these the Guardians of thy Doctrine, the Pillars of thy Church and Kingdom? Can Persons advanced by such infamous Methods be thy Representatives or Successors of thy holy Apostle?

And after all the Regulations that have been made in the Choice of a Pope, by confining the Election to the Cardinals, by shutting them up in their Cells, and allowing none to converse with them till two Thirds are agreed, yet the Line of Succession has been notoriously broken. ---- For several Years there was no Pope at all, then two or three together, † who divided the Profits, and spent them in all Kinds of Rioting and Debauchery. *Onuphrius*
in

* Spanh. 1709. † Spanh. 1516. 1818.

in his Lives of the Popes reckons up 30 Schisms in the *Roman Church*, and *Baronius* admits 22, the most considerable of which in the 14th Century continued 50 Years; one Pope residing at *Rome*, and his Brother Pope at *Avignon* in *France*, each anathematizing the other, and condemning his Decrees. Now in every Schism, one at least must be the Usurper; if the Popes at *Rome* were the rightful Successors of *St. Peter*, all the holy Orders conferred by those at *Avignon* must be null; and if we should trace this back through twenty or thirty Divisions, I doubt the Line of Succession would be lost long before we come up to *St. Peter*; so that if the Right of the Scriptures, and Administration of the Sacraments be the proper Inheritance of those only who are Heirs of the Apostles, by an uninterrupted Lineage, it may reasonably be questioned whether there be any Christian Church or Clergyman in the World; but thanks be to God the Christian Religion does not hang upon so slender a Thread.

Seventhly, We may argue against the Supremacy, from the *Extent of the Office which it is not possible for a single Person to discharge*. The Duty of an universal Pastor is to govern and feed the whole Church; but who can manage universal Empire? What Atlantick Shoulder can sustain the Burden of dispensing Justice to the whole World? What Strength of Body or Vigour of Mind can go through the Business of hearing all Appeals, of deciding all Controversies, and of rectifying all Disorders in the whole Universe? For God has promised to give his Son the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his Possession.* If therefore our Lord had intended such a general Officer in his Church, he would have furnished some Persons with superior Abilities to the rest of Mankind to fill the Chair; But

* Psal. ii. 8,

is any such peculiar Genius found amongst them? To say this may be done by *Legates* or *Nuncios*, is nothing to the purpose, because the Pope only is infallible, and therefore all Appeals are referred to himself. Besides, how vast must be the Expence, how great the Delay of Justice, and how tedious the Journeys for Men to travel with their Suits from all Parts of the habitable World to *Rome* for a Decision? If the Government of a Kingdom of moderate Extent, be as much as one wise Prince can manage; or if a small Diocese be sufficient to employ the Time and Labours of a faithful Bishop; how impossible must it be for a Clergyman advanced in Years, in the Decline of Life, and under visible Decays of Body and Mind to direct and govern the Christian World.

The other Branch of the episcopal Function is *to feed the sheep*; this was given in charge to St. Peter, and is incumbent upon all his Successors. If his *Holiness* therefore would discharge his pastoral Duty, he ought not to sit in his Chair at *Rome*, but travel through the unbelieving Nations, in order to their Conversion. Were the Shepherds of *Israel* cursed, **because they eat the fat, and cloathed themselves with the Wool, and killed them that were fed, but did not feed the Flock*? What then must be the Portion of an universal Bishop that never preaches at all? Does the Pope visit his Diocese, or labour in Word or Doctrine? Does he feed his Flock with Knowledge and Understanding? No, but he takes away the Key of Knowledge, and having obliged the People to shut their Eyes, puts into their Hands Pardons, Indulgences, and consecrated Toys, fitter to please and quiet froward Children, than to furnish a reasonable Mind with Religion or Virtue.

Now if we lay these things together, and consider, the Silence of the sacred Records and genuine

* Ezek. xxxiv. 3, 4.

nuine Remains of Antiquity about a supreme visible Head; the Uncertainty of St. *Peter's* being Bishop of *Rome*, and of the Supremacy's being granted not only to him, but his Successors, upon which their whole Title depends; the Character of those who have sat in the Papal Chair; the Impossibility of deriving their Lineage from St. *Peter* thro' so many Schisms and Divisions; and the Extent of the Office, which is beyond the Limits of a finite Capacity to discharge, it will amount to a Demonstration that the Hierarchy of the Church of *Rome* is built upon the *Sand*, and that their Popes have no better a Claim to an apostolical Supremacy over the Christian World, than to their extraordinary Gifts and Powers.

I shall conclude this Discourse with the following Remarks.

First, That *Jesus Christ is the only supreme Head of his Church.* This is the constant Language of Scripture, *One is your master, even Christ.*----
** He is the head of the body, the church, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.*---- † *God has put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the church.*---- ‡ *I would have you know, (says the Apostle to the Corinthians) that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God.* Should it not rather have been, the Head of every Man is the Pope, and the Head of the Pope is Christ? But no Head upon Earth is capable of governing such a Body, nor may any Man assume this Honour to himself; the Son of God alone is equal to this high Station, who holds the Stars in his right Hand, and by Virtue of the Immensity of his Presence, is capable of governing and feeding the diffusive Body of his Church in every Part of the World, § *Which being united to him their head, by joints and bands, receiveth nourishment,*

* Col. i. 18.

† Eph. i. 22.

‡ 1 Cor. xi. 3.

§ Colof. ii. 19.

ishment, and encreases with the increase of God. Let no Man therefore dare to take the Sceptre out of his Hand, and place it in the Hands of a frail Man, whose Breath is in his Nostrils. Kings and Princes may be Protectors of the Church, and Defenders of its Faith from Oppression and Violence within their Dominions, but Christ only is our living Head.

Secondly, *The Unity of the Catholick Church does not consist in its Relation to one visible Head, but in its Union to Christ.* All that profess true Faith in him, and Love to his Disciples, and who adorn their Profession by undissembled Piety and Virtue, are Members of that one mystical Body of which he is Head; for *there is but one body and one spirit, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and thro' all, and in you all.* * “

There is no Mention in Scripture, or primitive Antiquity, of an Union of all Christians under one political Head, (says the judicious Dr. Barrow) nor does it consist with the Nature and Genius of the Gospel Kingdom, which is not of this World, but disavows politick Artifices, and fleshly Wisdom; it discountenances the Imposition of all new Laws and Precepts, but such as are necessary for Order and Edification; it disclaims all worldly Power and Dominion, and is to be governed by Gentleness and Meekness, Argument and Persuasion: Whereas if it was a political Body, (says the Doctor) it must be the Reverse of all this; it must be supported by Riches and Wealth, by Force and Violence, by Courts of Judicature and penal Laws. All which things do much disagree from the original Design of the Christian Church, which is averse from Pomp, doth reject Domination, does not require Craft, Wealth, or Force to maintain it, “ but

* Barrow of Unity of the Church, p. 293.

“ but did at first, and may subsist without any
 “ such Means.”

Thirdly, *A supreme Jurisdiction and Authority over the Christian Church is the very Mark and Character of the Man of Sin and Son of Perdition; who is said, * to oppose, or exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing that he is God.* Kings and Emperors, in the Language of Scripture, are called *Gods*, on Account of their sovereign Authority and Power; but his Holiness of Rome has declared the *spiritual Power* to be above the *temporal*; and has shewed that he is *God*, not only by accepting the Titles of Deity, as † *Most holy Father; Lord God; Priest of the World, and Vicar General of Christ upon Earth*; but by treading on the Necks of Emperors, by kicking off their Crowns with his Foot, and obliging them to hold his Stirrup, when he mounted his Horse: The Emperor *Henry IV.* with his Empress and little Children waited three Days and three Nights barefoot, at the Gates of the Pope's Palace for Absolution, and after all lost his Territories, which the haughty Pope gave to *Rodolphus*, with this Inscription about the Crown: ‡ *Petra dedit Petro, Petrus Diadema Rodulpho: The Rock gave the Crown to Peter, and Peter gives it to Rodolph.* If we take a View of his Holiness in his Pontifical Grandeur, we may see him sitting in the Temple of God, upon a Throne high and lifted up, with a triple Crown on his Head, a triple Cross in one Hand, and a naked Sword in the other; with the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven at his Girdle, and a seven-fold Seal, in token of the seven-fold Gifts of the Holy Ghost; surrounded with Cardinals arrayed in Purple, attended with Ambassadors from all Nations; and when he appears in publick, Multitudes lie prostrate

* 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. † Acts & Mon. V. F. p. 10. Spanh. p. 1897.

‡ Ib. V. II. p. 202.

prostrate in his Presence, and pay him the most sacred and divine Worship. Can this be the Successor of *poor Peter*, who told the lame Man at the Gate of the Temple, that Silver and Gold he had none? Or is it not rather the Character of that Anti-christ, *whom God has threatned to consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming.*

Fourthly, *How dangerous must it be to continue in a Church, the Validity of all whose Administrations depend upon an uninterrupted Succession from St. Peter*; for if the Line should fail, or be broken, the whole Christian World must return to Heathenism, and be left to the uncovenanted Mercies of God. Surely if our Lord had designed to hang the whole of his Religion upon this Chain, he would have preserved it entire, and made every Link of it visible to the Satisfaction of the whole World; but as things now stand, all is uncertain; a *Christian* can never be satisfied that he hears the Word of God from the Lips of one that has a Right to interpret it, or receives the holy Sacrament from the Hands of one that can derive his Orders, in a direct Line, from the Apostles. It is therefore unaccountable that any who call themselves Protestants, should be fond of deriving the Validity of their Sacerdotal Functions thro' this impure and corrupt Channel, which has been so often cut off from its Fountain, and is so far from the apostolick Purity, that it seems for several Ages to have had no other Parent, than *the Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth.* The Protestant Religion is a much safer Way of Salvation, which admits Persons duly qualified and solemnly separated to the pastoral Office, to be rightful Ministers of Jesus Christ, and entitled to administer all Christian Ordinances with Efficacy, wherever the Providence of God shall cast their Lot.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, *We may observe the Vassalage and Slavery of the Romish Communion, which requires an absolute Subjection of Soul and Body, to the sovereign Will and Pleasure of the Pope.* Men must not judge for themselves, but take every thing upon the Word of the Priest, who will insure their Salvation at the Peril of his own. The inspired Apostle *Paul* never claimed this Privilege; he would have * *Every one persuaded in his own mind, and if they differed, to do it in love*; he disclaims a Dominion over the People's Faith; and the Apostle *Peter* forbids the Elders who had the Oversight of the Flock, † *to lord it over God's heritage*. But is this the Manner of the Church of *Rome*, which requires a blind and implicit Faith from all her Members, and commands us to lay aside our Understandings in order to become good Christians? Strange! That Men should have Liberty to exercise their Reason in the common Affairs of Life, and be obliged to shut their Eyes and be stark blind in Matters of Faith; nay, the Papists require us not only to lay aside our Understandings, but to believe in direct Opposition and Defiance to them; for if the Pope should decree Virtue to be Vice, and Vice Virtue, we are bound in Conscience, (says Cardinal *Bellarmino*) to believe it. Is there any thing like this among the most barbarous Nations?

But not content with abusing our Consciences they deprive us of our Estates and Liberties; Popery and Slavery are inseparable; and an Inquisition in the Church is a sure Mark of Slavery in the State. The Liberties of *England* grew up with the Reformation and will certainly die with it; when Popery got Possession of the *British* Throne in the Person of King *James II*, our Laws were presently suspended, our Charters taken from us, and our whole Constitution subverted: the Knife was then at our Throats, and the only Choice

* Phil. iii. 15, 16.

† 1 Pet. v. 3.

choice that seemed left, was to turn or burn. The Populace were alarmed, and Protestants shook their Chains and groaned for a Deliverer, which God of his infinite Mercy sent us in the Person of the great King *William III*, who without Violence or Blood delivered this Nation from Popery; and all *Europe* from the Chains and Fetters, that a great and successful Tyrant had prepared for them.

It follows from hence, *in the last Place, that an open Toleration of the Popish Religion is inconsistent with the Safety of a free People and a Protestant Government.* Every *Roman-Catholick* having professed Allegiance to a foreign Power must be an avowed Enemy to his King and Country. It is therefore made Death by a very severe Law for any Priest to pervert any of his Majesty's Subjects to Popery, or for any private Person to be willingly reconciled to the *Romish* Communion, because as often as Popery gains a Profelyte, the King loses a Subject. The Words of the Statute * are these, which I the rather mention because their Laity may not be acquainted with them: " All
 " Persons pretending to have Power, who shall
 " absolve, persuade, or withdraw any of the Queen's
 " Subjects from the Religion now established, to
 " the *Romish* Religion, or move them to promise
 " Obedience to the See of *Rome*, being thereof
 " lawfully convicted, shall suffer as in case of
 " High-treason.--- And if any Person after the End
 " of this Parliament, be willingly absolved, or
 " withdrawn as aforesaid, or willingly be reconciled,
 " or shall promise any Obedience to any
 " pretended Prince, Potentate, or usurped Authority
 " from *Rome*, then every such Person their
 " Procurers and Counsellors being thereof lawfully
 " convicted, shall be taken, tried, and judged, and
 " shall suffer as in Cases of High-treason." So that,

L

not

* 23 Eliz. Cap. i.

not only every Priest, but every new Convert to Popery is a Traytor, and a dead Man by the Laws of his Country; the most sacred Obligations being then judged an insufficient Security, from Men who had delivered up their Consciences into the Hands of those who pretend to bind and loose Men from their Sins, and to absolve them from the most solemn Oaths, or dispense with them, for the Service of the Catholick Cause.----Far be it from Protestant Dissenters to plead for Persecution or sanguinary Laws, or even negative Discouragements for religious Principles not subversive of the Foundations of Society and civil Government. Every faithful Subject ought to be protected in his *religious* as well as *civil Rights*, but if Men's Religion teaches them Rebellion; and every Convert to Popery is by Principle an Enemy to the Constitution of his Country, and a Friend to the *Pretender to his Majesty's Crown and Dignity*; surely the Government may preserve itself. Besides 'tis a known Maxim of Popery, and was decreed in the sixth Session of the Council of *Constance*, * that *no Faith is to be kept with Hereticks*, or Protestants; and our Histories abundantly testify that where they have had Power they have religiously observed it, as appears by the Violation of the *Edict of Nantes* in *France* against the Faith of the most solemn Treaties; the Massacres of *Paris* and *Ireland*, in which no Ties of Nature or Friendship could prevent the staining their Hands with the Blood of their nearest Protestant Relations; not to insist upon their many Plots and Conspiracies against the reformed Religion in *England*, and particularly that wherein King, Lords, and Commons assembled in Parliament were to be blown up at once: only I must observe, that all the Conspirators were absolved, and *Garnet* their Provincial, who performed the Office, is commended by *Bellarmino* as a Man of incomparable Sanctity and Holiness of Life.

But

* Spanh, Ec. Hist. p. 1845.

But they tell us their Natures are now changed, and their Principles not so fierce and bloody as formerly. Are they so? *Then may the Ethiopian change his Skin and the Leper his Spots.* Have we already forgot the late Cruelties at *Thorn*, the Numbers of *Palatines* that were driven from their native Country purely for Religion about 20 Years ago, and the present Usage of the *Saltzburghers* by their spiritual Tyrant? --- I would not fill your Heads with imaginary Dangers; but this I am sure of great Industry is used by Numbers of Priests (even in Defiance of a Law that makes it Death) to undermine the Protestant Religion. Bribes are given, and large Promises of Support and Encouragement to the meaner People; Catechisms and Books of Devotion are privately dispersed; Mass-houses are erected in several Parts of the City and Suburbs, and Priests officiate almost with open Doors; they insinuate themselves into private Families, and kindly relieve the necessitous and distress'd, on Condition of their living and dying in the Bosom of the Catholick Church. These are the new Methods of Conversion. But shall Protestants be asleep while the Enemy is cutting away the Ground from under their Feet? Have we any Concern for the reformed Religion, for the Liberties of our Country, and for the Welfare of our dear Children and Posterity? Let us then stand fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. Let Churchmen and Dissenters lay aside their Jealousies of each other, and bend their united Forces against the common Enemy. And may the Wisdom of the Legislature be directed to such Measures consistent with the Laws of Christianity, and the natural Rights of Mankind, as may strengthen the Protestant Interest and effectually prevent the Growth of a Religion which would rob us of all that is dear to us as Men and Christians!

The Minister of Christ are obliged more especially to appear in the Front of the Battle, not only to

animate their People and arm them against the approaching Danger, but to endeavour the delivering these deluded Souls out of the Snare of the Devil, by persuading them to read the Holy Scriptures, and use the Understandings God has given them to distinguish between Truth and Error; and by praying that God would enlighten their Minds, and give them Repentance to the Acknowledgment of the Truth: but if after our most fervent Prayers and kind Endeavours for their Conversion, they will shut their Eyes, and go on blindfold in a Religion that has neither Scripture, Reason, nor common Sense to support it; if they will profess Allegiance to a foreign Tyrant, and vow the Destruction of their King and Country, when their Superiors shall command them to the Service; we may then lawfully join in that Form of Prayer and Thanksgiving appointed by Parliament for the fifth of *November*, before it was altered by Archbishop *Laud*. “ ---Be thou still, O Lord, our
 “ mighty Protector, and scatter our cruel Enemies
 “ which delight in Blood; infatuate their Counsels,
 “ and root out that *Babylonish* and antichristian Sect,
 “ which say with *Jerusalem*, Down with it, Down
 “ with it to the Ground.---And to that End streng-
 “ then the Hands of our gracious King, the Nobles,
 “ and Magistrates of the Land, with Judgment and
 “ Justice, to cut off those Workers of Iniquity,
 “ whose Religion is Rebellion, whose Faith is Fac-
 “ tion, whose Practice is murdering of Souls and Bo-
 “ dies; and to root them out of the Confines and Li-
 “ mits of this Kingdom, that they may never prevail
 “ against us, and triumph in the Ruins of thy
 “ Church; and give us Grace by true and serious
 “ Repentance to avert these and the like Judgments
 “ from us, for thy dear Son’s Sake, our only Media-
 “ tor and Advocate;” to whom be Glory in the
 Churches throughout all Ages World without End.

Amen.

The Church of Rome's Claim of AUTHORITY and INFALLIBILITY, examined.

I N A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D A T

Salters-Hall, Jan. 30, 1734-5.

By GEORGE SMYTH, M.A.

With ADDITIONS.

2 COR. i. 24.

Not for that we have Dominion over your Faith, but are Helpers of your Joy: For by Faith ye stand.

I Appear before you this Day, to charge the Church of *Rome* with boldly usurping, and tyrannically exercising, that *Dominion* over the Faith of Christians, which the Apostle in the Text so expressly disclaims, and which he never once exercised in all his Life. If I can make good this Charge, I shall at once vindicate some of the Redeemer's unalienated *Prerogatives*; and defend

some of the most sacred *Rights* of the Christian World, against this Church which so insolently violates them.

It will not surely be said, that though *St. Paul* was not invested with this *Dominion*, yet that *St. Peter* was; and that therefore Popes as his Successors, and Vicars general of Christ upon Earth, may justly exercise it. For besides that *St. Paul* was an Apostle; speaks here in that Character; and when he owns, *WE have no Dominion over your Faith*, seems to disclaim it not only for himself, but in the Name of all the Apostles and Ministers of Jesus Christ, of what Rank and Eminence soever in the Christian Church; besides this, I say, He tells us in two several Places of this very Epistle, that he was *in nothing behind the very chiefest Apostles* *; and yet certainly he must have been far behind one of them, at least, if *St. Peter* was appointed supreme Head of the Church, and was entrusted with that *Authority*, and endowed with that *Infallibility* which his Successors now pretend to.

These are the *Powers* and *Privileges*, which the Church of *Rome* says she is invested with: It falls to my Share to examine them; and I hope to convince you before I have done, that never were any Claims more unjustly made, or more weakly and slenderly supported.

Her Claims upon the Foot of *Authority* are many, and of different Kinds; but as I have neither Time nor Inclination to extend the Subject of this Discourse further than was designed, when I was desired to treat of it; much less to invade the Province of any Person engaged with me in this Service; I shall confine myself to that *Authority* which she claims in *Matters of Faith*; and then go on to enquire into her *Infallibility*.

The former may, I think, be fairly stated; and will, I believe, be fully confuted, under the following Propositions.

I. That

* 2 Cor. xi. 5. and xii. 13.

I. That the Church hath Authority to settle the Canon of Scripture, and to determine what Books are, and what are not Canonical; in such Manner as that, by Virtue of her Authority, all Christians are obliged to receive those which she receives, and to reject those which she rejects.

II. That the Authority of Scripture as to us (*quoad nos*) and the Regard we are to pay to it, depends upon the Authority of the Church, which delivers these Scriptures to us, and declares them to be the Word of God.

III. That the Church hath Authority to interpret and give the Sense of Scripture; which Interpretation all Christians are obliged to receive and submit to.

IV. That since many Things which ought to be believed, are not at all contained in Scripture, the Church hath Authority to decree these as necessary to Salvation; and all Christians are thereupon obliged to believe them.

V. That she has a Right to judge and determine authoritatively, all Controversies relating to Matters of Faith; so as that all Christians are obliged to submit to her Decision.

If upon hearing these Claims made, you should be dispos'd to ask, (as any honest inquisitive Person would naturally do) Pray where is all this Power and Authority lodg'd? who is invested with it? who is to exercise it? you will be told the Catholick Church; meaning their own Church of *Rome*: and with this answer they have taught their own Votaries to rest satisfied. But we Protestants, who know that general Answers are often deceitful and evasive, and that this in particular is so; are not thus to be put off. For tho' at present we should pass by the Absurdity of calling a Part the whole; I mean of Calling that the Catholick Church, which to say the best of it is but a part, and that a very corrupt one too, of the Catholick Church,

we must beg to be a little more particularly informed. This Catholick Church means either some one or more Persons, in whom this Authority is vested: Is it then diffusively in the Church Universal, *i. e.* in all Christians throughout the World? Or is it in the Church Representative, *i. e.* in a General Council? Or is it in the Church Virtual, (as they express it) *i. e.* in his Holiness the Pope? The Advocates of *Rome* are as much perplex'd how to answer, and as little agreed in the Answers they give here, as we shall find them to be presently, when we come to ask the same Questions, with relation to their pretended *Infallibility*: And as they will be there urg'd more at large, I at present take no further Notice of them but go on to shew you; That no one Man, no set or number of Men on Earth, has any just claim to the Authority we are speaking of. In order to which I'll briefly consider the Particulars which have been mention'd; and since several of them may (in another View) fall under the notice of some other of my Brethren; I will take what care I can to keep to the Point of *Authority*; and not to repeat or anticipate, what has been, or may be, more pertinently said by them.

I. It is pretended that the Church hath Authority to settle the Canon of Scripture, to determine what Books are, and what are not Canonical; in such manner as that by Virtue of her Authority, all Christians are obliged to receive those which she receives, and to reject those which she rejects. And here you are to observe, that it is not their enquiring, and judging and determining for themselves what Books are canonical, that we complain of: For this is a Privilege which we think all capable persons may claim; We exercise it ourselves, and should be far enough from blaming them for doing so too. But that which we complain of is, their taking upon them to determine this Point for all the World, and their discouraging

raging all private Examination, and condemning
 with a dreadful Curse, all Contradiction to their De-
 crees concerning it. For so the Council of *Trent* has
 done. Whose words are as follows; “The Synod hath
 “ seen fit to annex to this Decree, a List of the sa-
 “ cred Books; lest a Doubt should arise in any one’s
 “ mind, which they are that the Synod receives; and
 then follows the Catalogue itself of all the Books
 both of the Old and New Testament: which we
 Protestants own, with an Addition of Six Apocry-
 phal Books to the Old Testament: after which they
 thus go on: “If any one does not receive these en-
 “ tire Books, and every part of them, as they are
 “ wont to be read in the Catholick Church, and are
 “ contained in the Ancient Latin Edition, for sacred
 “ and canonical, let him be Anathema”*. One would
 expect that, after such a positive Determination, and
 such a dreadful Sanction added to it, they should have
 some very good Title to produce for their Authority,
 and some very strong Reasons for their admitting
 all these Books into their Canon. As to the Latter,
 their reasons are all taken from what Councils and
 Fathers have said of this matter; particularly the 3d
 Council of *Carthage*, at which St. *Austin* was present;
 wherein (it is pretended) the very same Books were
 decreed to be Canonical, that are mention’d in the
 Council of *Trent*’s Catalogue. In answer to which,
 it might easily be shewn, that Councils and Fathers,
 are both for number and weight, against them:
 That the Design of this 3d Council of *Carthage*
 was, not to determine what Books were Canonical,
 in the sense in which that Word must be understood
 in this Dispute; but only to declare what Books
 might be profitably read in the publick Assemblies
 of Christians: That St. *Austin* himself when he
 calls the apocryphal Books Canonical, plainly means
 no more, than that as they contain useful Precepts
 and Instructions for Life and Manners, they may
 be

* Conc. Trid. Sess. 4. Decret. de Canon. Scripturis.

be publickly read to the Edification of the Church ; but without any Design of setting them upon an equal Foot with those which are Canonical in the highest and strictest Sense of the Word. That these Books themselves, contain so many idle Fables, gross Absurdities, plain Inconsistencies, and palpable Contradictions ; as could never have been dictated by the Spirit of God, and far outweigh all the Reasons that can be produc'd for admitting them into the Canon. All this and a great deal more might be unanswerably urg'd, but I choose to keep close to the Point of *Authority*, for though their Catalogue had been precisely the same with our own ; yet as we dare not assume to ourselves, so we can never allow to any body else, Authority to oblige all Christians under Pain of Damnation to receive precisely the same number of Books as Canonical. Let us enquire therefore how this *Authority* is supported. Their Proof stands thus :

The Testimony of the Church is the only means by which it can now, or could at any time be known, which Books are Canonical Scripture and which are not ; the Church therefore must have *Authority* to determine in this Case ; and all Christians must be oblig'd under the dreadfulest Penalty to stand by her Determination. Now tho' I am far from thinking that this is the *only* means ; yet since I am ready to grant that (if it be rightly understood) it is one very good means, by which a Judgment may be form'd in this matter ; I will at present take no Notice of this defect in the Argument ; but only consider what sort of a Proof this is, of the *Authority* claim'd. When the Bible is first put into the Hands of Children, they are told by their Parents and Instructors, that it is the Word of God : When they grow up to ripeness of Judgment, they may if they please, find that Christians in all Ages from the Apostles down to their own Times, have been so far agreed in this Point, that
their

their concurring Testimony, is one proper reason to induce us to believe so too. But how does this prove the *Authority* we are talking of? Is there no difference between being a *credible Witness* in a Cause, and being an *authoritative Judge*? May I not prudently attend to, and weigh, nay, believe the Truth of a Man's Testimony, without being oblig'd to stand by his Sentence and Determination, as a Judge? We receive the Testimony of the Church in all Ages, because it appears to us credible, and because (all Circumstances consider'd) we think it utterly improbable that so many Persons shou'd either themselves be deceiv'd, or conspire to deceive us; but it does not follow by any means, that therefore we are to submit to the Determination of the Church (much less the particular Church of *Rome*) as an authoritative Judge. It is farther pretended,

II. That the Authority of Scripture (*quoad nos*) as to us, and the regard we are to pay to it, depends upon the *Authority* of the Church, which delivers these Scriptures to us, and declares them to be the Word of God. This Point, I confess, is not any where that I know of, expressly and *in terminis*, decreed by the Council of *Trent*: But the ablest Defenders of the Church of *Rome*, have either expressly asserted it; or said that, from which it necessarily follows. *Hosius*, in justification of a bold Fellow who had said, that without the Testimony of the Church the Scripture wou'd just be of the same value and authority with *Æsop's* Fables, tells us that it was *pié dictum*; For that without the Church's Testimony, Scripture wou'd be of no great weight. Another declares that were it not for the Authority of the Church, He wou'd give no more credit to *St. Matthew* than to *Livy*. *Bellarmino* says, that if you take away the *Authority* of the Church of *Rome*, the whole Christian Faith may be question'd as
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doubtful *. And in another Place (for these things don't drop from them by chance, and unawares,) The Scripture Traditions, and all Doctrines whatsoever, depend on the Testimony of the Church, without which all are uncertain †. There are others of them (nay, and some of these themselves, at other times) who talk a little more modestly, in appearance at least, tho' in effect they say much the same things. They distinguish the Authority of Scripture *quoad se*, and *quoad nos*, i. e. in itself, and as to us. They own that the Authority of Scripture *quoad se*, is sacred and divine, and independent of the Church; but that as to any Authority it has, *quoad nos*, with respect to us, it neither has, nor can have any but what depends upon the Authority of the Church: And if it does not follow from hence that all the regard and reverence we owe to Scripture stands upon the foot of the same Authority, I shall despair of ever knowing what a just Consequence is. I could quote to you, *Stapleton*, *Bellarmino*, and *Melchior Canus*, and a great many more, to prove that this is the Doctrine even of their moderate Writers: But as I apprehend this will not be deny'd, I choose to shew you that how plausible soever this distinction may appear, there is really nothing in it to the purpose; and that tho' there were, yet that it is utterly false that the Church has any such Authority upon which the Authority of Scripture as to us depends.

1. The

* Nam si tollamus auctoritatem præsentis Ecclesiæ, & præsentis Concilii, in dubium revocari poterunt omnium aliorum Conciliorum Decreta, & tota Fides Christiana. — Et præterea omnium Conciliorum veterum & omnium dogmatum firmitas, pendet ab Auctoritate præsentis Ecclesiæ. *Bellarmino*. de Effectu Sacram. Lib. 2. Cap. 25. § *Tertium Testimonium*.

† Nam cum Scripturæ traditiones & omnia plane dogmata, ex Testimonio Ecclesiæ pendeant; nisi certissimi simus quæ sit vera Ecclesia, incerta erunt prorsus omnia. *Bellarmino*. de Eccl. Milit. L. 3. C. 10. §. *ad hoc necesse est*.

1. The distinction has no meaning pertinent to the present purpose; nor is there any difference (as to the matter in Hand) between the Authority of Scripture *in it self*, and *as to us*. For what are we to understand by the Authority of Scripture *in it self*? So far as I find, what they say to explain it amounts to no more than this; that the Scriptures are sacred and divine, and proceed from God as their Author: All which is very true; and it is as true that the Authority of the Scriptures results from their being thus sacred and divine; but their being so, is not (properly speaking) their Authority: For all proper Authority is relative to those who owe regard and subjection to it; and thus, the Authority of Scripture is that Power or Virtue which it has (as being the Word of God) to oblige us to believe and practise what it declares and enjoins: Which (if Words have any meaning) is its Authority *as to us*. So that either this is a distinction without a difference; or at least it is quite impertinent to the matter in debate. But tho' it were never so proper and pertinent, I add,

2. It is utterly false that the Church has any such Authority, upon which the Authority of Scripture *as to us* depends. For we have seen already that this Authority of Scripture arises from, and therefore must depend upon, its being the Word of God. This, and not the authoritative Declaration of the Church that it is so, is what gives it its binding Force, even *as to us*. Well, but still it is asked over again, How do you know that these Scriptures are the Word of God but by the Testimony of the Church? So that after all, Recourse must be had to her Authority. To which I answer over again, That as I have other Proofs besides the Testimony of the Church, by which I am induced to believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God; so the *Testimony* of the Church is so different a thing
from

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from its *Authority*, that I may credit the former in this case, without submitting to the latter.

St. *Paul* says to the *Ephesians* (what is equally true of the whole Christian Church) *Ye are built upon the Foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-Stone**; i. e. not the *Persons* of the Prophets, Apostles, and Jesus Christ, but the *Doctrines* and *Truths* taught by them, and contained in the Scriptures, are the Foundation on which the Church is built: All the Authority and Privileges therefore with which this Church is invested, must stand upon the same Bottom; i. e. upon Scripture: And to say Truth, either they refer us for the Proof of them. Is this consistent with their saying, That the Authority of Scripture, *as to us*, depends upon the Authority of the Church? What, does the Church receive Authority from Scripture with one Hand, and give Authority to Scripture with the other? Do the Foundation and Superstructure change Places, and mutually become both to each other? In defiance of these, and a great many more such Absurdities, it is still insisted on that the Church has this Authority: And *Stapleton* will tell you, That though *Hermas's Pastor* is indeed an Apocryphal Book, yet the Church might if she had pleased have decreed it to be a Canonical one, and obliged her Children to have received it as such. What shall we say to such an Assertion? I am not the first who has been led by it, to call to mind what *Tertullian* and *Chrysostom* say, upon Occasion of the Senate of *Rome's* Authority to judge and determine, what Gods should be owned and worshipped by the *Romans*. The former says, *Among you, Deity is examined into just as Men please; and unless the God whose Deity they are enquiring into pleases them,*

* Eph. ii. 20.

them, he shall be no God for them *. The latter says, That the Roman Senate has this *Dignity or Privilege* to vote for, and admit into the Number of their Gods †. May it not be said in the same manner of *Rome Papal*, That unless Scripture pleases them it shall not be Scripture; and that what Books shall be, and have the Authority of, Scripture, is to be carried by their Votes, and determined by their Decree? But the Claim (insolent as it is) calls for a graver Answer: Take the following one. *Hermas* either did, or he did not, write the Book called *Pastor* under divine Inspiration; and consequently, it either was, or was not, Canonical (*i. e.* an authoritative Rule of Faith and Manners) as soon as he had published it, and before the Church had determined any thing about it. If it was, there was no need of the Authority of the Church to give Authority to the Book; for by the same Reasons by which it was proved to be written by Inspiration, it was proved to be of divine Authority: If it was not, no Authority in the World could make it such. You will please to observe, That the same Reasoning will serve, as to all Books, whether really or pretendedly belonging to the Canon; and effectually disprove any Interest that the Authority of the Church has in this Matter. I go on to the Third Proposition.

III. That the Church hath Authority to interpret and fix the Sense of Scripture; and that all Christians are obliged to receive and submit to her Interpretation. Thus the Council of *Trent* hath decreed, That “ it belongs to the Church to judge “ of the true Sense and Interpretation of Scripture, “ and that no Person shall dare to interpret it in “ Matters

* Apud vos de humano arbitrato divinitas pensatur; nisi homini Deus placuerit, Deus non erit. *Tertul. Apol. C. 5. p. 6. Ed. Rigaltii, Ann. 1634.*

† Ταύτην εἶχε ἀξίαν [marg. ἕξιαν] χειροτονεῖν καὶ ἐννομεῖν θεοῦ. *Chrysost. Op. V. 3. p. 686. Ed. Savil.*

“ Matters relating to Faith and Manners, to any
 “ Sense contrary to that which the Church has
 “ held, and does still hold, or contrary to the un-
 “ animous Consent of the Fathers *. In which
 Words we are referred, you see, to the Church,
 and to the unanimous Consent of the Fathers, for
 the true Sense and Interpretation of Scripture.
 Now to pass by the ridiculous Absurdity of refer-
 ring private Christians to the Decrees of Popes or
 Councils, or to the Writings of the Fathers,
 which they have neither Leisure nor Skill to con-
 sult; I would fain know how it is possible for the
 most learned and laborious Man in the World to
 come at the Sense of Scripture this Way? Has the
 Church itself (mean by it what you will) always
 been uniformly of the same Opinion, as to the
 Sense of all the Texts of Scripture, which she has
 interpreted? If this should be pretended, the con-
 trary may easily be shewn. Take any one Text of
 Scripture, about the Sense of which Protestants
 and Papists disagree, and I will defy any Man alive
 to prove, that the Fathers unanimously agree in
 that Interpretation of it, which the Papists con-
 tend for, against the Protestants. How then is it
 possible to find the Sense of Scripture this way,
 when the Church it self has not always, and in all
 Points, been of the same Mind; when the Fathers are
 far from always agreeing with themselves, or with
 one another; and when the Doctrines and Inter-
 pretations of the Church of *Rome* on the one Hand,
 and the Fathers on the other, are in many Instances
 so widely different? But that which is more direct-
 ly to my present Purpose, is, to shew that suppo-
 sing we could come at that Interpretation of
 Scripture which the Church holds, and the Fa-
 thers agree in; though this might afford a favour-
 able Presumption that such Interpretation is right;
 yet

* Conc. Trid. Sess. 4. Decret. de Edit. & usa Sacr. Libr.

yet it does by no means follow from hence, that the Church may authoritatively fix the Sense of Scripture; or that no Man may in any case (be the Reasons never so good) differ from or reject her Interpretation.

Our Adversaries charge us with Pride and Disobedience, a Spirit of Faction and Rebellion, for not blindly submitting to the Decrees of the Church: But the Charge is an unjust one. They know, or may know (for it has often been declared) that we are ready to pay all proper Deference to the Judgment of wise and learned Men: And when a great Number, and a long Succession of such, can be shewn to have agreed in the Interpretation of any Texts of Scripture; especially if such their Agreement appears to have proceeded from sober Enquiry, and thorough Conviction, without Prejudice or corrupt Biass; we own that great Regard is to be had to them, and that such their Interpretation is not lightly to be rejected or departed from: But still we cannot submit to them as *Lords of our Faith*: We are ready to hear them and learn of them; but we can see no Reason why they should be to us instead of Christ, or expect from us that implicit Submission which is due to him only, and those commissioned by him, and inspired by his Spirit. He that is any thing versed in the Writings of the *Papists*, has often found them boasting of their *Omnes, Semper, & Ubique*; The whole Church, all the Fathers, at all Times, and in all Places, agreeing in their Doctrines and Interpretations of Scripture. They have been often answered (and I believe Protestants are still of the same Mind) that as to any Points in which they can shew *such* an Agreement, we will not oppose or contradict them. But then as we know that such Agreement can never be shewn, in any of the Points in Difference betwixt them and us; so we take leave farther to declare, that even in this Case, our giving in to,

and not opposing Points so agreed, would be owing to a rational Persuasion, that things so universally maintained must be true, and not to an Opinion of any proper Authority the Persons so agreeing have over us in these Matters.

You see then that we are ready to pay to Church and Fathers all proper Deference and Regard; and where they have Reason or Scripture on their Side, we have no Inclination to disagree with them. But it is *Authority* which is claimed; it is blind Submission that is required; without which all the rest (it is pretended) signifies nothing. Let us see then upon what this *Authority* to interpret Scripture for us, and this Demand of implicit Submission from us, is founded. Is it upon Scripture; or any Promise there given them, of an *infallible* Guidance by the Spirit of God, in these Matters? Their Proofs of this Sort, will be considered and confuted when I come to the Point of *Infallibility*. Is it that they have greater natural Abilities or acquired Advantages, for interpreting Scripture, than Protestants have? Besides that this can never be proved, and need not be granted; we are firmly persuaded, that such Freedom of Enquiry as Protestants plead for, and exercise in interpreting Scripture, is an Advantage for coming at the true Sense of it; which those of the Church of *Rome*, who are bound down by the *Decrees* of Popes and Councils, and the Opinions of Fathers, must necessarily want: And after all, supposing they had these superior abilities and advantages; though upon this account it might be fit to attend to, and consider whether the Sense they fix on Scripture be the true one; yet it would by no means prove them to be *Authoritative* Interpreters. Is it that they use properer Means, take fitter Methods to come at the Sense of Scripture than we do; and that therefore their Authority in this Matter, should be owned and submitted to? We say they do not; but however
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let any impartial Person judge between us. We think the proper Methods to be taken for this Purpose, are to consult the Scriptures in the original Languages; to compare the more obscure and difficult Texts of it, with those which speak of the same Matters more plainly and intelligibly; not to understand any particular Texts of Scripture in such a Sense, as contradicts, or is inconsistent with, the whole Design and Tenour of it; to attend diligently to all such Circumstances of Persons writing or written to, Time, Place, &c. which may give Light to the Matter we are enquiring after; in short, the very same Methods which all Men of Sense take, to understand Writings of any other sort, in which they meet with Difficulties: And he that on account of the Importance and Sacredness of the Matters enquired into, shall add fervent Prayer to the Father of Lights, and his utmost Care to keep his Mind free from Lust, Passion, and corrupt Prejudices; as he may reckon upon it, that he will not be left ignorant of any Truth necessary to Salvation, nor suffered to fall into any damnable Error; so he bids fair for coming at the true Sense of Scripture, even in Matters of less Moment.

But all these Methods (say our Adversaries) are insufficient, and have been found unsuccessful; those who pretend to make use of them still differ in their Interpretation of Scripture. I answer, that tho' they may differ in matters of less Importance, yet there is no Reason to think that those who honestly use these methods, shall ever be suffer'd to err in any Points absolutely necessary to their Salvation. Let us see however, what are those better and surer Methods which they follow: *Stapleton* reckons up four of them: the Rule of Faith, (of which Tradition is a part); the Practice of the Church; the Sense of Scripture in which the Fathers agree; and the Sense decreed by Councils: These you are to follow and you cannot err; and these are the only sure

methods of interpreting Scripture. As to the first of these, the Rule of Faith; so far as they mean Scripture by it, we are agreed; for they know we own Scripture to be the best help to interpret Scripture. But when they take in unwritten Tradition as a part of the Rule of Faith, and tell us that Scripture is to be interpreted by that; we reject it, as being for many reasons utterly unfit for any such Purpose: particularly as being it self much more obscure, uncertain, and doubtful, than Scripture which is to be interpreted by the help of it. And then as to the other three Methods prescrib'd; surely nothing was ever more impertinent; it is a direct taking for granted, the Point in debate: the Enquiry is, what are the best methods of interpreting and coming at the Sense of Scripture? The answer is, Follow the Church, Fathers, and Councils: *i.e.* don't interpret or judge of the Sense of it, (tho' this is the very thing propos'd to be done) but blindly follow the Interpretation and Sense of it, which others have authoritatively determin'd beforehand.

For tho' these are called methods or means of interpreting Scripture; and by our being directed to them for that purpose, one might be apt to conclude that we were to fix the Sense of Scripture by the use of these means; and to judge how far they are or are not useful for that purpose; yet I can assure you that no such thing is intended or will be allowed; so far from it, that the Council of *Trent* (as you have heard) has decreed, that no Man shall dare to interpret Scripture to any Sense, contrary to that which the Church holds, and the Fathers agree in: And let who will set about the work of interpreting Scripture, tho' he be never so well qualify'd for it; at his peril be it, if in matters of Faith or Manners, he departs a hair's breadth from what is before determin'd to be the true Sense of it. So that you see after all, when they talk of private Persons interpreting Scripture, and seem to direct to what they call proper methods of judging of the true Sense
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of it; they really mean no such thing, nor will allow any such Privilege to any body but their own Church: nay, if they would speak consistently, they must all of them own, what a very powerful party among them assert and maintain; that the Authority of interpreting Scripture is inherent in his Holiness, the Pope: for their Rule of Faith, is that which the Pope approves; their Usage and Practice of the Church, is what he pleases to observe himself, and direct others to observe; the Interpretation of the Fathers, is what he sees fit to follow; and the Decrees of Councils are then only binding, when he has graciously vouchsaf'd to confirm them.

There is another Argument upon which they lay very great Stress, in proving this Authority of the Church to interpret Scripture. I will just mention it here, tho' it will be more fully consider'd and answer'd under the Head of *Infallibility*. It is thus: Scripture (they tell us) is an *unsens'd Letter*, ('tis their own Expression). It has no determinate meaning or signification of its own; and in order to understand it rightly, it is necessary that some body shou'd have Authority to interpret and fix the Sense of it: This Power (they say) Christ has given to the Church; and who so fit for it? Who so likely to make a good use of it? That we may not be impos'd upon by this specious Argument; It must be remember'd that there is a wide Difference between interpreting Scripture by the best Helps, and in the best manner we can; and doing it authoritatively, so as to oblige the Consciences of Men to receive and submit to our Interpretation, without varying from it or daring to contradict it. The former we say the Christian Church, and every Member of it, may do, and are allow'd and encourag'd by their Saviour to do it: Nay, if they set honestly about it, they may hope for and reckon upon such divine Assistance, as will secure them from any such mistakes as will prove damnable at last: The latter, is what neither this nor any other Argument in the World will ever prove.

For any Man to say that Scripture is an *unsens'd Letter*, which has no certain sense or meaning till the Church determines what that sense or meaning is; is talking either very impertinently, or very impudently: If they intend by it, that the Words or Letters of Scripture, as written or printed on Paper, are mere arbitrary Marks, and have no meaning in them; it is utterly impertinent: For this is equally true of all the Books and Writings in the World; it is as true of their Interpretation of Scripture when committed to Paper, as of Scripture itself. If they intend by it, that the Letters and Words of Scripture are not fitted to convey to, or excite in our Minds, any certain and determinate meaning; it is horridly impudent: It is a bold affront to the blessed God, and an unworthy disparagement of the Revelation he has vouchsaf'd us in his Word. Are we then to think, that tho' Men can by writing or speaking convey their meaning to each other, with all the certainty that is needful; yet that the blessed God cannot? Or shall we say, that tho' he could, yet he would not? Even when he was giving us a Book which could be no use to us any farther than it was understood; concerning which he himself declares, that it is profitable to all necessary purposes, and able to make us wise to Salvation. In short, if this authoritative claim is a just one, Scripture (for ought I see) deserves this, and all the rest of the disparaging things, they have said about it: For upon this Supposition, it can be of no use to us, nor have we any need of it: If it has no determinate meaning till the Church by Inspiration fixes one, to what purpose was it to commit the divine Will to writing? For any good end it answers, it seems to us, God might as well constantly, or as occasion offer'd, have reveal'd his Will to Popes and Councils, to be by them handed out to particular Christians; as be oblig'd still to reveal the true sense and meaning of those writings. The supposition therefore
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upon which this Argument proceeds, is you see both impudent and false ; and the Consequence drawn from it, that therefore the Church may and can *authoritatively* and *infallibly* interpret these unmeaning Scriptures, is of a Piece with it ; as I shall shew you more fully by and by. I go on to a fourth Claim,

IV. That since many Things which ought to be believed and done, are not at all contained in Scripture, the Church hath *Authority* to decree and enjoin these Things as necessary to Salvation ; and all Christians are thereupon obliged to believe and practise accordingly. I readily own, that upon some Occasions, the *Popish* Writers themselves will some of them say Things utterly inconsistent with this Claim. Thus, *e. g.* *Bellarmin* tells us in one Place of his Writings (though it plainly contradicts what he himself says elsewhere) That no Proposition can be [*de fide*] an Article of Faith, but what is revealed in Scripture*. Others of them have in Words expressly disclaimed all Power in the Church to coin new Articles of Faith. But it will be easy to shew you, that many of them claim this Authority for the Church ; and that all of them hold such Principles from which it must necessarily follow ; tho' when it serves their Purpose they would seem to disclaim it. Many of them expressly claim it : Thus, *e. g.* *Melchior Canus* says, There are many Things belonging to the Faith of Christians, which are neither manifestly nor obscurely contained in the sacred Scriptures. *Stapleton* will tell you, That many Things necessary to be believed, in order to Salvation, are not comprehended in the Scriptures, but are recommended to us only by the Authority of the Church. And elsewhere, That the Church

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* Sciendum est enim. propositionem fidei concludi tali syllogismo.

Quicquid Deus revelavit in Scripturis est verum : Hoc Deus revelavit in Scripturis : Ergo hoc est verum. *Bellarmin. De Verb. Dei L. 3. C. 10. Resp. ad Arg. 15.*

may propose and define Matters of Faith, without any evident, or so much as probable, Testimony of Scripture. I might add many more, if it were needful: But I go on, to shew you, That they all hold such Principles from which it necessarily follows, that the Church has Authority to decree many Things as necessary to Salvation, which the Scripture takes no Notice of.

They all maintain, that Tradition unwritten, is a part of the Rule of Faith, and *to be received with the same pious Affection and Reverence, that is due to Scripture* *. Now by the help of this same Tradition, they know a Power of Things, of which our Bibles say never a Word. And as you heard before concerning Scripture, that its Authority, *as to us*, depends upon the Authority of the Church, and that it has no certain meaning other than what the Church is pleased to put upon it, and propose to us to be believed; So they tell us as to unwritten Traditions too, that tho' they come either *from the Mouth of Christ himself, or were dictated by the Holy Spirit, and have been handed down by a continued Succession* †; yet that they received all their Authority from the Church: *i. e.* If these Traditions relate to Matters of Faith, no Man is obliged to believe them; or if they relate to Manners, no Man is obliged to observe them, as necessary to Salvation; 'till the Church has declared and proposed them to be so: But then, as soon as ever the Church has interposed with her Authority to propose and declare them as necessary to Salvation, immediately they are so. Would you think it? To believe the perpetual Virginity of the blessed Virgin shall be an Article of Faith; and to fast in *Lent*, shall be a pious Practice, necessary to Salvation; if the Church pleases to propose and declare them such. On the other Hand; To believe that *God is in Christ Jesus reconciling*

* Conc. Trid. Sess. 4. Decret. de Canon Scripturis.

† Conc. Trid. *ibid.*

ciling the World unto himself, and to pray to God in the Name of *Christ Jesus*; shall neither of them be necessary to Salvation, till the Church declares them to be so. Nay, you could never know that the former is a Christian Doctrine, and the latter a Christian Duty, unless the Church had told you that such and such Texts of Scripture are to be interpreted to this Sense: and had, by her Authority, declared them necessary to Salvation.

I am apt to think, this will appear strange, and sound harshly to Protestant Ears; but I can tell you somewhat else, which, it may be, you will wonder at as much: Some of their own Authors are ingenuous enough to own, that all those Doctrines and Practices of the Church, whose Author and Original is not to be found in Scripture, are to be reckoned Apostolical Traditions: and they own that the following are of this Sort: St. *Peter's* having been at *Rome*, and the Primacy of the Bishop of that See; the Sacrifice of the Altar; real Presence; Communion in one kind; private Mass; the keeping and adoring the consecrated Host; the Sacraments of Confirmation, Orders, Matrimony, Penance, and extreme Unction; the Necessity of auricular Confession to a Priest; Indulgences; Purgatory; and in short, almost every Point in Difference between them and us: And yet after all, these very Men, when they debate these Points with Protestants, have the Face to quote Scripture to us in Defence of them, after owning that they are not founded upon Scripture, but only upon Apostolical Tradition. *Authority* and *Infallibility* will it seems bear them out, in doing what we *fallible* Hereticks think very strange things. It falls not within my Province to detect the Falshood and Forgery of these unwritten Traditions, by the help of which such marvellous Feats are to be done: But after having shewn you that they have made many Things to be *de fide*, and necessary to Salvation, which they

they own have no other Foundation ; it is my Business to prove to you, that they have no *Authority* to do so : And to shew you moreover, that as to those Things which are contained in Scripture, their being Articles of Faith, and necessary to Salvation, depends, not upon the *authoritative* Proposition or Declaration of the Church, but upon their having this Stress laid upon them in Scripture itself.

As I was musing with myself, how to propose my Argument against such *Authority*, in the clearest and most intelligible manner ; I at first thought it might be proper to begin with enquiring, Whether absolutely *every thing* which the Church may see fit to propose and declare necessary to be believed and done in order to Salvation, be for that Reason, and that Reason only *so* necessary ? If the Answer had been (as surely it ought to be) No ; I should have gone on and reason'd thus : It follows therefore, that besides the authoritative Proposition and Declaration of the Church, there must be somewhat either in the Nature of the Things themselves, or in the Source and Original from whence they derive, which contributes (at least) towards their being necessary to Salvation, and without which it would not be fit, even for the Church itself, to declare them so. And from hence I designed to have concluded the very Point I was to prove, that therefore it is not the Church's authoritative Proposition and Declaration only, that can make these things necessary to be believed and done in order to Salvation. And I am fully persuaded, that if the Enquiry just now mentioned, be answered in the negative, this Reasoning thereupon, would be unanswerably conclusive. But I soon saw Reason to alter my Method of Arguing ; because I suspected whether I might not be answer'd in the affirmative ; that absolutely *every thing* which the Church may see fit to propose and declare necessary

to Salvation, is so, for that Reason, and that Reason only. For why should I imagine any thing to be too absurd for the Church of *Rome* to decree necessary to be believ'd, after it has decreed the Doctrine of Transubstantiation necessary to be believ'd? Why should I think any thing could be too trifling for that Church to require, which has recommended Pilgrimages to the Churches and Reliques of dead Saints? Why should I take it for granted, that any thing was so monstrously bad and wicked, that the Authority of the Church itself cannot make it necessary to be believ'd or done; when their great Champion *Bellarmino* has told us in so many Words *, that if the Pope thro' mistake, should command Vice and forbid Virtue, the Church (unless she would sin against Conscience) would be oblig'd to believe that Vice is good and Virtue evil? These things consider'd, I chose to proceed thus :

The Advocates of *Rome* will I suppose own, that whatever the Church *might* do, she never *has*, nor ever *will* propose or declare any thing as necessary to Salvation, but what is founded either upon Scripture or Apostolical Tradition; for one or both these, is always pleaded as the ground of what she decrees. Now the Apostles from whom Scripture and these Traditions are said to have come down to us, either knew that those things which the Church takes thence and decrees or proposes as necessary to Salvation, were indeed necessary to Salvation; or they did not know it : Attend now to the Consequences, which ever Way this Question is answer'd. If they did know it, they either declar'd it to, or they conceal'd it from, those to whom they

* *Fides Catholica docet, omnem virtutem esse bonam, omne vitium esse malum : Si autem Papa erraret præcipiendo vitia, vel prohibendo virtutes, teneretur Ecclesia credere vitia esse bona, & virtutes malas, nisi vellet contra Conscientiam peccare. Bellarm. de Rom. Pontif. l. 4. c. 5. §. ult.*

they preach'd *: Surely it won't be said that they conceal'd any thing that was absolutely necessary to Salvation; this wou'd be charging them with unfaithfulness to their Trust: Particularly as to St. *Paul*, it wou'd be charging him with high Presumption for pronouncing even an *Angel from Heaven, or any Man upon Earth, accursed*, who shou'd preach any other Gospel †, than that which he and the rest of the Apostles had received themselves and taught to others: It would be giving him the lie for having said to the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus* whom he sent for to *Miletus*, that he had kept back nothing that was profitable, and therefore to be sure nothing that was necessary; and again that he had not shunned to declare to them all the Counsel of God ‡. So that I think we may venture to affirm, that neither he nor any other of the Apostles conceal'd any thing which they knew to be necessary to Salvation: Every thing of this sort therefore that they knew, they certainly declar'd; and if they declar'd it to be necessary to Salvation, I can't imagine what need there can be of the Church's Authoritative Proposal and Declaration; or how there can be any Authority, any where, to decree what shall be necessary to Salvation; other than that of the Apostles themselves, under Christ the Head of the Church. Let us see now what follows upon supposition the Question should be answer'd the other way; *i. e.* that the Apostles did not know, concerning some of those things grounded upon Scripture, or Tradition proceeding from them, that they were necessary to Salvation; but which being so in themselves, (tho' they did not know it), the Church hath since declar'd them to be so. If this is the Case, I would fain be told how the Church since the Apostles Days, came to know

* Vid. Chilling. Ch. 4. Sect. 18. p. m. 144, 145.

† Gal. i. 8, 9.

‡ Acts xx. 20, 27.

know more fully and compleatly what is necessary to Salvation, than the Apostles themselves did? I don't know that she pretends to any new Revelations of this Sort; and if she should pretend to them, we should expect otherguise Proofs of their coming from God, than I think her able to produce: and yet I cannot devise how the Church of *Rome* should come to know more than the Apostles, but by new Revelation.

I can think of but one possible way of evading the force of this Reasoning, and that is so poor an one that it scarce deserves to be regarded: It is thus; that the Church neither knows, nor pretends to know, better than the Apostles, what is necessary to Salvation; but the Apostles might know several things, which tho' they were not necessary to Salvation in their Days, would become necessary in after Times; and therefore took Care to hand them down to the Church by Tradition, that she might exercise her Authority in proposing and declaring them to be necessary to Salvation at such Times and in such Circumstances, as she in her great Prudence and infallible Judgment thought fit. But let us consider; Things necessary to Salvation at one time and not at another? Necessary in our Days, and not so in the Days of the Apostles? Necessary to Christians of later Ages, and not so to the primitive Christians? Sure this cannot be true: I always thought that to be the Christian *Faith, which was once* (and at once) *delivered to the Saints* * by Christ and his Apostles. But to let that pass: If this was the case, methinks the Apostles should have taken care to leave it upon record, or at least to have given us some Hint in Scripture, that more would be necessary to Salvation in after times than was then: And yet I cannot find any thing like this (but a great deal to the contrary) in all the New Testament. But it may be, tho'

Scripture

* Jude, ver. 3.

Scripture says nothing of this sort, Tradition does; and that you know, serves their Purpose full as well: I do not remember ever yet to have heard of any such Tradition; but if ever I should, it will appear to me so very unlikely to have proceeded from the Apostles, that I shall strongly suspect it of Forgery, and demand very clear Proofs of its Genuineness, before I give Credit to it. I go on to the fifth and last Proposition.

V. That the Church has Authority to judge and determine in all Controversies relating to matters of Faith; and that Christians are obliged to be determined by, and submit to her Judgment and Decision. I need not spend your time in proving that such Authority is claim'd in behalf of the Church: Councils have so often, and Popes do so continually exercise it; calling all those Hereticks and accursed (and as far as they have it in their Power treating them as such) who oppose the Church's Decrees, or who, in any Controversies of Faith which arise, decline her Judgment and refuse Submission to her Determinations; that there can be no need of farther Evidence. Let us see how this Claim is supported: By much the same sort of Proofs (we shall find) as the former: particularly the third, To interpret and give the Sense of Scripture, which has no certain Sense till she fixes it: and from what was said in Confutation of that, this before us might sufficiently be disproved: So that I shall need to say the less upon it here.

Briefly thus: If they can but persuade you to take three Steps with them (they are pretty large ones indeed) the Point will be proved: There must be a judge of Controversies; Scripture is not fit to be, nor can possibly be, that Judge; the Church and she alone is fit for that Office, and invested with this Authority, by Christ her invisible Head. And therefore she has this Authority, and is in the right to exercise and employ it. That there must
be

be a Judge of Controversies, meaning thereby a living, ay and an infallible one; they all affirm with the utmost Confidence: Their Proofs of which will be considered presently. That Scripture is not fit to be, cannot possibly be, this Judge, they are very positive; nor will we contradict them, if they mean a *living* and infallible Judge, according to the strict meaning of that Word: But then we say, that these Scriptures are very fit, nay the fittest thing in the World, to be the Rule by which Christians should judge and determine all Disputes concerning Matters of Faith; as will no doubt be proved to you in the next Discourse. Well, but the Church, *i. e.* (for so they mean) the Pope, or a Council, or the Pope presiding in a Council, and confirming its Decrees, is fit to be, and endowed with Infallibility that it may be, this Judge of Controversies. That it has no such Infallibility shall be proved hereafter: and that she is so far from being the only fit Judge, as not to be at all fit for that Office, * is plain from hence; that in all these Controversies she is a party; and her Power and Authority, her Temporal Grandeur and Interest, are so nearly concerned in them, that it is not to be expected she should exercise this Office with Equity and Impartiality. And if I had time for it I could shew you, that from the time she first began to claim this authoritative and infallible Judgment, she has us'd it in so corrupt and arbitrary a manner, as has quite forfeited her Reputation for Honesty and Integrity; and as most effectually discourage all who are not in her Interests, from submitting to her Tribunal.

You

* Quærendi sunt Judices: Si Christiani de utraque parte dari non possunt; quia studiis veritas impeditur. De foris quærendus est Judex: Si Paganus, non potest nosse Christiana secreta. Si Judæus, inimicus est Christiani Baptismatis: Ergo in terris de hac re nullum poterit reperiri judicium; de cœlo quærendus est judex. Sed ut quid pulsamus ad cœlum, cum habeamus hic in Evangelio Testamentum? *Optat. Milev. adv. Parm. L. 5. p. 100 Ed. Lutet. 1676. Fol.*

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You have now heard the Claims of the Church of *Rome*, for Authority in matters of Faith; You have heard too, some Part of what we have to say (for all could not be said in this compass of Time) for the Confutation of them. If, wondering at the Exorbitancy of these Claims, you should ask, How she could ever have the Insolence to make them? I take the true Account of the Matter to be thus: That between Scripture and the Church of *Rome*, there is a most irreconcilable Difference: Both cannot possibly be in the right: If Scripture be true, many of *her* Doctrines must be false; great part of her Worship must be idolatrous; many of her Practices absurd and superstitious; and her whole Power and Form of Government usurp'd, arbitrary and tyrannical. She seems therefore to have put on a bold Face, and to have resolved, that Scripture shall have no more Authority, no other Meaning, than she is graciously pleased to allow: and if any thing, not to be met with in Scripture, is found necessary to defend her Cause, and justify her Tyranny *, Tradition shall be applied to, to furnish it out: Tradition which she can forge, alter, and make to say just what she pleases.

I go on now to the other Point, INFALLIBILITY. Their Pretence to which is in itself so monstrously insolent and absurd; so utterly void of all solid Proof; so plainly contradictory to History and indisputable Facts; such a barefac'd Attempt to impose upon the Reason and common Sense of Mankind, and to bring them into a State of the most abject Slavery; that it is really wonderful (to those who are not acquainted with the History of that Church, and the gradual Advances it made in Demands

* Cum enim ex Scripturis arguuntur (*sc* hæretici) in accusationem convertuntur ipsarum Scripturarum, quasi non recte habeant, neque sint ex auctoritate, ea quia varie sunt dictæ, & quia non possit ex his inveniri Veritas, ab his qui nesciant *Traditionem*. Non enim per Literas traditam illam, sed per vivam vocem, & seq. *Iren. contra Her. L. 5. C. 2. Ed. Massuet p. 174.*

mands of this sort) how it should ever enter into the Heads of mortal Men, to lay Claim to it. And yet the Fact is indisputably true; they have long claimed it; they continue to do so; their whole Fabrick of Authority rests upon this Claim, and falls when it is confuted; so that I should be thought to spend your Time needlessly, if I were to iet about a laboured Proof of it. *Cressy* indeed, a Profelyte from the Church of *England* to Popery, in the last Century, seems to have been sick of the Word, and to have wish'd he could fairly have got rid of it: He tells us, *No such Word can be found in any Council: That he saw no Necessity that ever Protestants should have heard it named, much less press'd with so much Earnestness, as (he owns) it has been, in their Books of Controversy: That the Word Infallibility had been combated by Chillingworth, with too great Success, which therefore he wishes were forgotten or laid aside**; and intimates it as his Opinion, that the just Authority of the Church might do without it. The poor Man seem'd to have some little remains of Modesty when he wrote this; but it is highly probable, that his new Masters school'd him severely for talking at this rate; for in an Appendix to an after Edition of his Book, he unsays it all again, by telling us *That the Church can never deceive nor be deceived; and that Authority and Infallibility in the Church, are in Effect all one; for to say that the Church hath Authority to oblige all Christians to receive her Doctrines, and withal to say she is fallible, is Extremity of Injustice and Tyranny†*. But whether *Cressy* had ever made this Recantation or no; The Church of *Rome* is so well appriz'd, that her Authority can never be supported without the Claim of Infallibility; that as she does not seem at all disposed to give it up, so I am under no Apprehension of

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their

* Exomolog. Ch. 40. §. 3. p. m. 284.

† Exomol. Append. C. 5.

their reckoning it a Calumny, when we charge them with making this Claim. And indeed, neither *Cressy*, not what I have quoted from him, had been worth mentioning on this Occasion, were it not that I might warn you of those Methods, which possibly the present Agents for the Church of *Rome* among us may take, to gain Profelytes: I mean representing their Cause, and the Doctrines of the Church of *Rome*, in the softest and most favourable manner, and concealing as much as they can the most shocking Parts of it; that uncautious People may swallow it the more easily. This was manifestly *Cressy's* Intention, and it is not at all unlikely, that others are now making use of the same Arts. If you should happen to meet with any of them, who should be for laying aside this shocking Word *Infallibility*, while they are recommending their Religion to you; pray ask them, Whether they, or any Papist, can or dare own that their Church *has* or *may* err in matters of Faith; if they should tell you that their Councils do not use this Word, and that therefore they need not; ask them, Whether no Council ever decreed, that the Church *non potest errare*, cannot err? and if so, what is the Difference between its being impossible for her to err, and being infallible? Ask them, whether their greatest Doctors have not told us, that were it not for the Infallibility of the Church, their Faith could have no Foundation, nor their Religion any Certainty? Nay, Whether the Council of *Basil* has not told us, that if once that peniculous Error were admitted, that *Councils may err*, the whole Catholick Faith would totter. And to say Truth, this is talking (though falsely and impudently) yet consistently at least; whereas those (if really there be any such) who tells us, that Authority will do of it self, though they should drop Infallibility; not only contradict the known Sense of their Church,

Church, but in effect give up its Power, and destroy the Foundations upon which its Grandeur and Tyranny subsists. And accordingly in supporting those *authoritative Claims* mentioned under the former Head, they always have recourse to the Church's Infallibility: a Persuasion of which does more to satisfy their Votaries of the Justice of their Claims, and to dispose them blindly to submit to them, than all their other Proofs put together: For in short, the whole of their Faith is resolv'd, into the unerring *Authority* and *Infallibility* of their Church: So that, besides what has been already said, if I can (as I verily think I shall) confute their Pretensions to the latter, it will be a farther (and it may be a more striking) Proof, than any I have yet offer'd, of the Absurdity and Impudence of the former. To this end, and that we may the better understand what is precisely the Point in debate, it will be of use, in the First Place,

I. To state the notion of *Infallibility*: How far, and with respect to what things, the Church of *Rome* lays claim to it. It will, I suppose, be granted me, that he who does not know absolutely every thing, may possibly be mistaken in some things: since therefore it will be allow'd me that Omniscience, or the knowing absolutely every thing that is knowable, is the Prerogative of God alone, and which no Man or number of Men can (or indeed does) lay claim to; it will follow that the Church is not absolutely, and with respect to all things Infallible: To do them Justice, they don't pretend that she is. The Question therefore is, how far, and with respect to what things does she pretend to be Infallible? With one Voice they will all tell you that she is infallible in matters of Faith: A few of them (I mean the *Jesuits*, in the famous dispute between them, and the *Jansenists*) maintain'd, and would fain have got it to have been settled and universally own'd, that the Church (*i.e.* the Pope, for

so the *Jesuits* meant) was Infallible with relation to matters of *Fact* also. Again: They will all of them (I think) own, that tho' the Church is Infallible in her decrees concerning Faith and Manners, yet that she may become (and actually has at some times, been) greatly corrupt in Discipline and Practice; and that both her Head and her Members may be thus corrupted.

With respect to this last Concession, I cannot help observing, that to any Man of plain common Sense, there appears to be a manifest inconsistency in it. The Church is Infallible in its decrees with relation to *Matters of Faith*, and *Manners*: i. e. things to be believ'd, and things to be practis'd: As to the former, *Matters of Faith*; it not only decrees a right; but it always actually believes right too: For Error, or varying the least tittle from what the Church has decreed to be believ'd; is Heresy: and Heresy *ipso facto* cuts a Man off from the Church, and excludes all hope of Salvation: But the Case is (it seems) otherwise with respect to *Manners*; for though the Church does, and cannot but, decree as infallibly upon this Head, as with respect to *Matters of Faith*; yet she herself may become corrupt in her Manners, and *Practise* many things (tho' she can never *believe* any thing) contrary to her own Decrees. What should make this Difference I cannot devise; or why a mistake in the understanding, should more effectually cut a Man off from the Communion of the Church, and the hope of Salvation, than the wickedness of his Heart and Life. I am sure St. *Paul* tells us, that tho' he had the Gift of Prophecy, and understood all Mysteries, and all Knowledge; nay, tho' he had Faith so that he could remove Mountains, yet if he had no Charity, she should be nothing*. The Charity he there speaks of, is on all Hands acknowledged

* 1 Cor. xiii 2.

ledg'd to be the Source of holy Obedience and regular Practice: Whatever else I have, if I want this, I am nothing; and therefore one would think, not Infallible: And why the Church of *Rome* after having claim'd *Infallibility*, does not rub her forehead, and claim *Impeccability* too, I am at a loss to know; I think verily they might as justly, and with as good Proof from Reason and Scripture claim the latter, as the former. And so with respect to the distinction just now mention'd, of Matters of *Faith* and Matters of *Fact*; I have never yet met with any sufficient Reasons, why those who allow the Infallibility of the Church of *Rome* as to the first, should disallow it as to the last: I can see indeed how it might come to pass, that in the dispute between the *Jesuits* and *Jansenists*, the different Views and Interests of the two Parties, might dispose the former to stickle as warmly for the Pope's Infallibility in Matters of *Fact*, as the latter did against it: But as I cannot tell whether, if it had not been for such an opposition of Interests and Views, this Point when once started, would not have been roundly carry'd in favour of his Holiness; so, for ought I know, if a favourable Opportunity should offer, the claim may be reviv'd again, and the Church be decreed to be as Infallible in Matters of *Fact*, as she pretends to be in Matters of *Faith*: Sure I am, that time was, when there was as little likelihood that any Christian Church should ever pretend to the latter; as there is now, that the Church of *Rome* may some time or other, lay claim to the former. But since this is not yet the Case, and that I may not be thought to dispute against any claim, other than what our Adversaries are universally agreed in making, I will confine myself to their *Infallibility in matters of Faith*.

Upon hearing such an extraordinary Privilege claimed, it is natural to ask those who pretend to it, Pray where is it to be found? Who is intrusted with

it? To whom are we to apply for an Infallible Interpretation of Scripture, and for an infallible Decision of all Controversies? The having this Privilege is not a whit of more Importance than the knowing where it is lodged; nor can it possibly be of any Use, till it is determined and known who is in Possession of it. If God has appointed such an infallible Teacher and Judge, if he has commanded us upon Pain of Damnation, to hearken to him, and to be determined by him; no Man alive can doubt but that he has taken Care to make him so conspicuous and remarkable, that it shall be impossible to mistake him; or at least that there are means sufficiently plain and certain, by which we may know, without any doubt, who and where he is. Suppose his Majesty should tell his Subjects, that he had appointed a Lord Chancellor and twelve Judges, to hear and determine all Causes belonging severally to their Cognizance; would it not appear very strange, if he should conceal their Names, or leave us no possible Method of knowing who the Persons were whom he had appointed and commissioned to execute these Offices? And yet upon Enquiry, this will be found to be the very Case before us: For our Adversaries themselves, are so far from being agreed where it is lodged, that they are of different and inconsistent Opinions about it: Give me leave to ask (in Archbishop Tillotson's * Words)

“ Can any Man think that this Privilege was at
 “ first conferred upon the Church of *Rome*, and
 “ that Christians in all Ages did believe it, and
 “ had constant Recourse to it for determining their
 “ Differences; and yet that that very Church
 “ which enjoy'd and us'd it so long, should now
 “ be at a Loss where to find it? Nothing could
 “ have fallen out more unluckily, than that there
 “ should be such Differences among them about
 “ that,

“ that, which they pretend to be the only Means
“ of ending all Differences”. For you are to
know, that in the Church of *Rome* itself, there
are several Competitors for this *Infallibility*: Some
of them will tell you that it is in the Pope alone, and
not in any General Council; Others that it is in a
General Council only, and not in the Pope; And
others, that it is in neither Pope nor Council singly,
but in both together; *i. e.* That when a General
Council is called by the Pope, when he presides in
it, either in Person or by his Legates, and when he
confirms its Decrees, then they are infallibly true
and absolutely binding: And yet there is a fourth
Opinion, that these Decrees are not infallible and
binding after all, till the Church hath universally
owned and received them. Whom, or what are
we to believe in this Case? For these Opinions are
so inconsistent, that if you suppose any one of them
to be true, all the rest must be false.

But what if after all, an Expedient may be found
out to reconcile these different Opinions; or at least
to make Mens Minds easy, even tho’ they subsist?
Chillingworth having urg’d the very Difficulty we
are now upon, home on the Church of *Rome*;
Cressy takes upon him to solve it; and he goes about
it in the following Manner. Hereto I answer (says
he) *That there is no Need at all of an Answer, since
the Objection answers it self: For by saying, there are
Variety of Opinions among Catholicks, acknowledged
for such even while they differ, it follows, that the Ob-
jector is not obliged to submit to that Judge which any
Catholick refuses* * : *i. e.* (for so it must hence fol-
low) Since there are many in the Church of *Rome*,
own’d as Members of that Catholick Church, who
deny that *Infallibility* is in the Pope; many others
who deny that it is in a General Council, and so of
the rest; you are not obliged to believe that it is in

* *Cressy’s Exomolog. C. 59. p. m. 442.*

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any one of them : Which (to my Understanding) is leaving us at Liberty whether we will believe it is any where : For if it be not in some one or more of these Competitors for it, I cannot imagine where it should be ; for there is no Body else that puts in for it : And if it be no where, or if no Body can tell who has it, I shall conclude that they have it not ; nay, that there is no such thing to be had. After having given this wise Reason why the Difficulty needed no Answer, (by which you see the whole Cause is given up) He proceeds to add two other Answers ; The whole Meaning of both which amounts to no more than this : That tho' Catholicks are not perfectly of a Mind, where their *Infallibility* is ; yet they are all agreed, that their Church has it : And if we Protestants will but be so good natur'd, as to take this upon their Word, they will leave us at our Liberty to lodge it either in the Pope, as the Jesuits do ; or in a General Council, as the *Gallican* Church does ; or in both together, as many others do. In short, in any of them, in all of them, or in none of them (for there are good Catholicks who deny it of every one of them.) Do but believe that we have it, and submit to the Orders and Decrees which it issues out ; and we will desire no more of you. Must not these Men have lost their Senses, to give us such an Answer ; or think that we have lost ours, and so may be satisfy'd with it ? *Infallibility* in the Church, and yet it is neither in the Head, nor in the Members ! neither in the Church Virtual, nor Representative, nor diffusive ! at least you need not believe it is in any of them. It is just as if I should say, That there is somewhere in the World a very great and powerful Kingdom, distinguished from all others by some one peculiar Advantage, which none of the rest have : And being ask'd, Pray in what Quarter of the World is it ? I should answer, That tho' the whole World is divided into *Europe, Asia,*
Africa,

Africa, and *America*, yet the Kingdom I talk of, is in no one, or more of these. It must be own'd, that thus far, at least, the Church of *Rome* is in the right to require implicit Faith, blind Submission and Obedience, of her Votaries; since no Man with his Eyes open, can help boggling at such Absurdities.

It will be said (it may be) that *Cressy* went the wrong Way to work, in answering this Difficulty; that by the Concessions he has made, he has well nigh betrayed the Cause: That those who understand themselves better, take Care to fix this *Infallibility* somewhere; and tho' they do indeed differ very widely in their Opinions about it, yet they are all very certain of the Truth of their Opinions severally. I have already enumerated four of them: And since it is (I think) impossible to devise a Fifth, if I can prove to you that all these four are false; it must surely follow, That they have no such Thing as *Infallibility* among them.

1. Then, The *Jesuits*; almost all their several Orders of *Monks*; great numbers of their learned *Doctors*; and I believe the greater part of the common People among them; are of the Opinion, that the Pope alone is *infallible*: As I could prove to you, (if I had Time) from a great Number of their Authors. But because this will not be deny'd, I will content myself with proving, that this Opinion cannot be true. For several of their Popes have actually erred; and that in Matters professedly relating to the Faith: acting as Popes, and pronouncing or decreeing *ex Cathedra*. Pope *Adrian VI.* was so honest as to own that Popes are fallible. If he said true, the Cause is given up: If he was mistaken, then he himself at least, tho' a Pope, was not *infallible*. Consult *Platana* in his History of the Lives of the Popes I am going to mention, and you will find that some or other of them must have been mistaken. *Stephen VI.* annulled and rescinded

scinded the Decrees of *Formosus* I. *John X.* annulled those of *Stephen*, and restored those of *Formosus*. *Romulus* I. abrogated the Decrees of *Stephen*: And *Sergius* III. had such an abhorrence of *Formosus*, and all that he did as Pope, that he obliged Priests whom he had ordained, to be re-ordained. Their own Canon Law tells us, That *Nicholas* I. * decreed, it was not fit for Clergymen to bear Arms: Compare this with what *Urban* II. *Boniface* VIII. and several other Popes have advised, or decreed, or practised, and then judge whether some or other of them must have been mistaken. I could give you many more Instances, but these are enough: For upon the Principles of those whom I am now opposing, every Pope must have been infallible; and if it be proved concerning any one of them that he erred, there is no Reason to believe that any one of them were *infallible*.

It would be easy to produce several Instances wherein the same Pope has contradicted himself: I'll mention but one: *Martin* V. confirm'd the decree of the Council of *Constance*, which set a General Council above the Pope: And yet he afterwards publish'd a Bull forbidding all Appeals from the Pope to a General Council. Unless Infallibility can reconcile Contradictions, he must have been fallible in one or the other of these Cases.

Nay, I can go farther, and prove to you, not only that many of their Popes have been the most wicked and profligate Wretches that were ever born, (this they own, but tell us, it is well enough consistent with their Infallibility) but that they have Believ'd and Taught and Patroniz'd, what the Church of *Rome* itself has declar'd to be Heresy. If *Athanasius* † is to be credited, Pope *Liberius* for fear of Death (with which he was threatned) subscrib'd to *Arianism*. And this account is confirm'd
both

* Gratian. Distinct, 50. C. 5.

† Ep. ad solit. Vit. agentes, p. 837. Ed. Par. 1627.

both by St. Hilary * and St. Jerome †. Tertulian ‡ tells us concerning one of the Bishops of Rome, (it was I think Pope Ancietus) that he own'd the Prophecies of Montanus, Prisca and Maximilia. Honorius not only defended the Heresy of the Monothelites, but was condemn'd by three General Councils, every one of them confirm'd by the Pope. John XXIII. was ** charg'd at the Council of Constance, with the blackest and most enormous Crimes, under 70 Articles. Fifty of which were read and prov'd, and declar'd to be publick and notorious. And tho' his denying the Immortality of the Soul, was (I think) one of those Articles, which (out of respect to the apostolick See) was not allow'd to be expressly urg'd against him; yet I do not find that any body attempted to clear him of that Charge. The Council itself in their Citation expressly charges him with *Heresy, Schism, Simony*, as well as other Crimes, and afterwards actually depos'd him. This is the Man concerning whom the Emperor (who was there present) declar'd that the whole Council unanimously own'd him for a true Pope, before his Deposition. Was Gregory the Great infallible, when he condemn'd the Title of Universal Bishop as Prophane and Antichristian? The very Title the Popes of Rome now claim. Or was Gelasius infallible ††, when he condemn'd (what the Church of Rome has since decreed) Communion in one kind, and call'd it *Sacrilegious*? But enough of this sort of Proof: If the Gentlemen we have to do with in this dispute, would suffer us to argue with them on the Principles of Reason and common Sense, (as the rest of Mankind submit to be treated) it would be easy to shew from these Principles,

* Hilar in Frag. col. 426.

† Hieron. Catal. vir. illust.

‡ Tertul. adv. Prax. p. m. 634. C.

** L. Enfant Hist. de Conc. de Constance, p. 141, 175, 220. Ed. 4to. Amst. 1714.

†† Gratian. de Consecrat. Dist. 2. C. 12.

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Principles, that there is scarce any one Proposition in all the World more incredible, than that all the Bishops of *Rome* have been infallible. To prove this there needs nothing more, than a brief representation what Sort of Persons, Popes (at least for a great many Centuries last past) have generally been; how they are chosen; and how they often proceed in their decrees and decisions concerning Matters of Faith.

The Qualifications most regarded in a Candidate for the Papal Chair, are, not Piety and Virtue, no nor Learning and sound Knowledge in the Doctrines of Christianity; For many of them have been monsters in wickedness, and exceedingly ignorant as to these things: But, a deep Skill in Politicks and Canon Law; in Dispensations, and Beneficiary Matters; Excommunications, and Appeals: And then, the older the better; as being the more likely to die soon, and make way for others, of whom there are always enow gaping after this Dignity. Well, when any one or more such Candidates are pitch'd upon as the Electors (or those under whose influence they are) think will best promote their Interests, and answer their Purposes; how does the Choice proceed? Is it (as is pretended) under the Influence and Direction of the Spirit of God, or is it by trick and artifice, and under the Influence of a Spirit of Faction and Cabal? Let any Man read even their own accounts of the usual methods of proceeding in these Cases, and then Judge. Such a Pope, thus created, sets himself down in his infallible Chair, and is to determine authoritatively a matter of Faith; how does he proceed? If he takes, what our Adversaries themselves will own to be, the wisest and safest Course; he consults his Cardinals, or (as the Case may happen) calls upon Divines or Canonists, to hear their Opinions; *i. e.* He that is himself *Infallible*, advises with, and borrows Light from those who are *Fallible*;

Fallible; nay, and after all, is (it may be) so unknowing about the affair in question, as not to be able to form a true Judgment, or to come to a right Determination upon what he has heard: But as it is his business to pronounce; when he has done so, it's your Duty to receive and submit to his Decree as infallibly true, and binding upon the whole Christian World. What a ridiculous Farce must it be, to behold, what must often have happened at *Rome*; his Holiness with an affair of this Sort before him, solicited on the one Hand by the *Jesuits*, on the other by a secret Friend to the *Jansenists*; now by the *Dominicans*, next by the *Franciscans*; all of them in different Interests, and acting from different Views; here an Agent from one temporal Prince, putting the Pope in mind of former Favours and promising new ones; there the Ambassador of another, insisting on his Master's Rights, and threatening hard if he be not oblig'd. I imagine that Popes are as much perplexed and at a loss to know what to do upon such Occasions, as other fallible People are, in like Circumstances; and as he himself could be, if you suppose him stript of his Infallibility. Nay, and I think we may venture to say, that with all their Infallibility about them, Popes have often made Decrees and issued out Bulls, which they have afterwards found to be wrong, and heartily repented of.-----I have been the longer in confuting this Pretence of Infallibility being lodg'd in the Pope alone, because I think it is the prevailing Opinion in the Church of *Rome*. I will be shorter on the rest.

2. Others pretend that *Infallibility* is lodg'd, not in the Pope, but in a General Council only. Thus it was agreed in the Councils of *Constance* and *Basil*; and this is the Opinion of the * *Gallican* Church in general, and of several learned Doctors else-

* Vid. *Bellarmino* de Rom. Potif. L. 4. c. 2. §. *Secunda Sententia*, &c.

elsewhere. But this Pretence is (I apprehend) in some respects more absurd and incredible than the former. If I could believe the *Infallibility* they claim were any where to be found among Men; I should incline rather to expect to find it in some one particular Person, than in a Hundred or five Hundred of them got together, who yet (it is own'd) take them singly, are every Man of them fallible. Is it a whit more likely, that any Number of fallible Men should make up an infallible Company; than that any Number of Cyphers should make a positive Sum? If *Infallibility* be lodg'd in a General Council only, I would fain know where it is, when there is no General Council subsisting? This is often the Case; a Hundred, two Hundred Years have run out, from the breaking up one, to the calling of another: It is now above 170 Years since their last General Council of *Trent*, Nay, the first that was ever called so, was at *Nice* in the Year 325. Where was *Infallibility* during these Intervals? Who, and where was the Church's unerring Guide and Judge of all Controversies? They will not say surely, that the Decrees of former Councils are this unerring Guide and Judge; for besides that the Church had no such Decrees, for the first 300 Years; we might as well take Scripture as the Decrees of Councils, for these Purposes. When we Protestants say that Scripture is a sufficient Guide, and the only Rule by which to judge of and determine Controversies in Matters of Faith; they tell us, no: Scripture is by no means sufficient or fit for this Office; that it is absolutely necessary there should be a living Judge to be apply'd to and consulted upon all Emergencies. Are the Decrees of Councils such a Judge? Are not these as capable of being perverted, and having different Interpretations put upon them, as the Scriptures? If it be said that the Church is in possession of these Decrees and knows the meaning of them, and can de-
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termine all Controversies by them; I ask whether she can do it *Infallibly*, and without Danger of erring? If it be answered (as it must be) Yes: I ask again, who is meant by this *Church*? It cannot be a General Council; for that we suppose is not subsisting, and therefore can't be apply'd to: It is not the Pope, no nor any body else, that can do this infallibly; for that destroys the Supposition we now go upon, that a General Council only is Infallible.----I could produce to you the plainest Testimonies of their own Writers, and unanswerable Reasons made use of by them, to prove that *Infallibility* is not lodg'd in General Councils only: I could shew you that if it is lodg'd there, not only these Authors (who yet are held in the highest esteem in that Church) but even the Popes themselves (who you may well think, are not for lodging Infallibility any where but in themselves) are mistaken, Mistaken did I say? They must all of them be as very Hereticks, as we Protestants are said to be: For surely nothing can make a Man more so, than denying this Privilege to those who really and only have it: It is rejecting the Judge whom they all pretend to be so necessary, that the Church can't subsist without him; it is sapping the Foundation of all the Church's boasted Authority, and overthrowing it at once.-----I could shew you General Councils, not only decreeing what is false and directly contrary to Scripture, (tho' that alone is enough to convince us, that they were fallible) but reversing, opposing, and directly contradicting each other's Decrees: So that we may be as certain that General Councils are not infallible, as that the two Ends of a Contradiction cannot be both true.-----If you have ever heard or read any History of them; how they are call'd; what Sort of Persons they generally consist of; by what Methods they ordinarily proceed; and from what Sort of Motives they usually act; you will find little reason to believe them

them infallible. So long ago, as *Greg. Nazianzen's* time, pious and peaceable Men were quite out of love with them; for thus he says, in one of his Epistles, * “ If I must write you the Truth, I am in a Disposition to avoid all Assemblies of Bishops, as having never yet seen a happy end of any one of their Synods or Councils: Nor have I ever found that they do more towards lessening, than towards heightning any Mischiefs that are complain'd of. It may sound harsh to say it; but their Spirit of Contention and Ambition, their Pride and Lust of Power, is such as no Words can express.” By all that ever I have read, I don't find any reason to believe that Matters are at all mended since his Days. The History of the famous Council of *Trent*, has been written by Father *Paul*, and by Cardinal *Pallavicini*, both Members of their own Church: The former of 'em has indeed spoken too much plain Truth, to be much relish'd at *Rome*; the latter is strongly in the Pope's Interest, and therefore much better approv'd: But let any impartial Person read either of 'em, or compare them together, if he be not sick of the Notion of the Infallibility of General Councils, I am grossly mistaken.----I go on to consider the third Opinion.

3. That a Pope † and a General Council together are infallible, *i. e.* that when a General Council is call'd by the Pope, when he presides in it either in Person or by his Legates, and when he confirms its Decrees; then they are infallible: They can't possibly err, and ought to be implicitly submitted to and obey'd. But why so? If (as we have shewn, and

* Έχω μὲν ὅτι τῶς εἰ δὲ τ' ἀληθὲς γράφειν, ὥς πάντα σύλλογον Φεύγειν ἐπισκοποῦν ὅτι μηδεμιάς συνόδου τέλος εἶδον χρῆσον μηδὲ λύσιν κακῶν μᾶλλον ἐσχηκίας, ἢ προσθήκην. Αἱ γὰρ φιλονεικίαι καὶ φιλαρχίαι ἀλλ' ὅπως μήτε Φορτικὴν ὑπολαβὴς οὕτω νοσφῶνται καὶ λόγους κοεῖται. κ. τ. λ. *Ad Prop. Ep. 55. Op. Vol I, p. m. 814. Ed. Par. 1630.*

† Bellarm. de Concil. L. 2. c. 2.

and as the Defenders of this Opinion admit) both be fallible separately consider'd, I can't conceive how their clubbing together should make them infallible. This is much the same Absurdity we had before, two Cyphers make a Sum. Besides, if Infallibility depends upon the Conjunction and Agreement of a Pope and a General Council, the Church of *Rome* cannot be always in possession of it, because they have not a General Council always subsisting; and it must follow from the Opinion we are now considering, that when the General Council breaks up, Infallibility expires along with it. Not to insist on these Absurdities of this Opinion, I could shew you (if I had time) Decrees of one General Council confirm'd by one Pope, and contradicted, reversed by the same Authority; nay, the self-same Pope first confirming, and afterwards contradicting the Decree of a general Council. I could shew you the Council of *Constance* decreeing that the Laity should receive the Communion in one Kind only, and yet acknowledge that Christ instituted it in both Kinds; and this Decree confirm'd by Pope *Martin V.* And the Council of *Trent* * confirm'd by Pope *Pius IV.* decreeing that Divine Service should be perform'd in the *Latin* (i. e. an unknown) Tongue, in direct contradiction to *St. Paul's* Doctrine, 1 *Cor.* xiv. But to wave all this, it may be prov'd, I think, to a Demonstration, that if the Pope and the Council separately be both of them fallible, they can't both together be infallible; nor can any Decrees of the latter, tho' confirm'd by the former, be known to be more infallibly true, than if both were as fallible jointly, as they are own'd to be separately. For consider, the Infallibility can't come from the Council, that is own'd to be fallible; its Decrees therefore may be true or false, and the Council in the right, or mistaken, just as it happens. Well,

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* Conc. Trident. Sess. 22. C. 8.

when the Council has past the Decree, and so done its work, it comes to his *Holiness* to be confirm'd; but can he who is acknowledg'd to be fallible, infallibly assure me that the Council has not err'd in making this Decree? 'Tis manifestly impossible. I will only add as to this Head, that if either the Pope himself, or the Church of *Rome* in general, are thoroughly perswaded that a General Council confirm'd by a Pope, is really *infallible*; nothing can be more unaccountable, than the Reluctance which the Popes generally shew to the calling a General Council, and the Terror and Fright they are in, when they have the Prospect of its assembling. Is then the boasted Privilege of so little Value, that to keep the Pope easy and in good Humour, the Church must be content to do without it? With what Difficulty, and after how long and earnest Sollicitations was the Council of *Trent* itself obtain'd, eventho' Emperor, Kings, Princes, in a manner the whole Body of the Church, most ardently desir'd it, and thought there was no other Expedient to come at Peace and Truth, and a Reformation of the Church both in its Head and in its Members?----I go on,

4. Others are of Opinion that Infallibility is only in the Church Universal; *i. e.* (I suppose) diffusively in the whole mystical Body of Christ consisting of all its Members here upon Earth: So as that, though neither Pope, nor Council, nor any particular Church, are infallible; yet when their Decrees are received and submitted to, by the Catholick Church, they then become infallibly true, and absolutely binding. This has been the Opinion of a considerable Number of great and learned Men in that Church; and this is (it must be own'd) talking more modestly than the others do; though as to any of the purposes for which *Infallibility* is claim'd, this Opinion is as ridiculous as any of the rest. If all that they mean is, that the universal Church and every

every Member of it, cannot err in Matters absolutely necessary to Salvation; I don't know that Protestants have any Occasion to contradict or deny it. But then if this be own'd, it is not because we apprehend that either any, or all the Members of the Church together, are infallible; but because we take our Saviour's Promise, that *the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against his Church*, to be an Assurance to us that he will have a Church in this World as long as the World itself lasts; and because those who err in any of those Things which are absolutely necessary to Salvation, do for that very Reason cease to be Members of that Church. But then after all, if this is all the *Infallibility* which is claim'd, it is nothing to the purpose; nor will it by any means answer the great End and Design for which it is claim'd. Our Adversaries are perpetually ringing in our Ears, the absolute Necessity of an infallible Interpreter of Scripture, and Judge of Controversies, to whom we may have recourse on all Emergencies. Is the universal Church such an one? Can all the Members of it meet to consult and determine? It must not be said that they can meet in a General Council by their Representatives, for this would not answer the End, unless the Church universal could impart her *Infallibility* to her Representatives; which I believe will not be said; nay, and I have prov'd already, that the Church Representative has not *Infallibility*.

I have gone through the four several Opinions maintain'd by different Persons in the Communion of the Church of *Rome*, concerning the Seat of *Infallibility*, where and in whom this wonderful Privilege is lodg'd. Since these have (I think) all been fairly examin'd and fully confuted, and no other is (that I know of) pretended to, or can be devis'd; I would now conclude that they have no such Privilege any where among them; were it not that they tell us, they have plain Texts of Scrip-

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ture, exprefs Promises of Christ himself, affuring them that the true Church is infallible, and that their Church is the true one : and if so, the thing is certainly true, and may justly be claim'd, notwithstanding this Difference of Opinions where it is lodg'd, and all the Difficulties and Absurdities with which those Opinions are severally charg'd. What though it be so doubtful, whether it is Pope, or Council, or both together, or the whole Church that is infallible ; and so difficult to answer the Objections that are raised, against any or all of them being so ; if Christ has promis'd it, and the Scripture says it, no Man ought to deny it.

In answer to all this, it would I think be sufficient to say ; That it is very hard to believe our Saviour should give Promises to his Church that can do it no Good : That the Church is never the better for its *Infallibility*, if no Body can tell who has it : And that the appointing an infallible Interpreter and Judge, can answer no manner of purpose, till it is known who is this Judge. But waving all this, and that we may not be thought to decline the Force of any of their Arguments, especially of any such as are taken from Scripture, allow me to examine this somewhat particularly.

I begin with observing that a Proof of this Sort, is arguing in a vicious Circle ; and an absurd begging that the thing may be granted, which ought to be prov'd. For if you ask, how they know from exprefs Scripture, or good Consequence from it, that the Church is infallible ? The Answer must be, that the Church has interpreted Scripture to this Sense ; and upon their own Principles you could never have known that this is the true Sense of Scripture, if the Church had not so interpreted it : Well, but why am I bound to believe, and be satisfy'd with the Church's Interpretation ? The Answer is, because the Church is infallible. Can any thing be more ridiculous ?

Suffer

Suffer me but to put on, for a moment, the Church of *Rome*'s bold Front, and to reason upon her avowed Principles ; and I undertake, by the self-same Argument, to prove that I myself am infallible, nay, and that no-body is so besides myself. Thus : St. *John*, speaking of Christians, says, *Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things,* 1 *John* ii. 20. Upon quoting this Text, for this Purpose, I shall, no doubt, be ask'd, 1st, How this proves me infallible? And 2^{dly}, Since it seems to speak as much of other Christians as of me, How it proves me *only* to be infallible? Now tho' either of these Questions will, I confess, puzzle me grievously unless you allow me to borrow his Holiness's Confidence, and to make use of some of his Principles ; yet thus furnish'd, I assure you I have my Answer ready. For, to take no Notice at present, that this Text imports Infallibility, as much (for ought I can see) as any other in the Bible : Thus I reply, (and it is exactly what the Church of *Rome* has the Modesty to say for herself.) I am the only authoritative Interpreter of Scripture ; and as no body can be sure of the true Sense of it, till I tell it them ; I now declare the true meaning of this Text to be, that I am infallible. Well, but how does all this prove that I *only* am infallible? Just as well as any other Texts of Scripture, which speak as much of any other Christians as of those of the *Romish* Communion ; prove that the Church of *Rome* is infallible : And if you pretend to contradict me, I will rub my Forehead over again, and tell you once more, I am the authoritative Interpreter of Scripture, and that the meaning of this Text is, not only that I am infallible, but that I *only* am so : And let me but find Fools enough to believe it, and stand by me in the Defence of it ; and who will dare to dispute or oppose my Claim. --- Having thus made use of their Confidence and their Principles, to answer the Purposes for which

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I assum'd them ; I am now very well content to lay both aside, and leave them in the Possession of the right Owners.

But tho' what I have been saying manifestly proves the Absurdity of their quoting Scriptures in proof of their Church's Infallibility, yet for the sake of those, who paying a just Regard to their Bibles, are willing to believe any thing they find prov'd by Arguments taken from thence ; it wou'd not be amiss to consider the Texts themselves, (the most considerable of them at least) and what sort of Proof they afford of the Church's Infallibility.

* *Bellarmino* quotes in Proof of the Pope's Infallibility, those Words of our Saviour to *St. Peter*, *Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as Wheat ; but I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not ; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren.* Luke xxii. 31, 32. He tells us, the true Meaning of this Text is, that our Lord obtain'd two Privileges for *St. Peter*, 1st, That he himself, how strongly soever he might be tempted by the Devil, should never lose true Faith. The 2^d Privilege was, that neither *Peter* himself, as Pontiff of *Rome*, nor any other of his Successors in that See, should ever teach any thing contrary to the true Faith. The first of these Privileges (says *Bellarmino*) did not, it may be, descend to *Peter's* Successors ; but the second doubtless did. To prove which, he quotes seven *Popes*, *Theophylact*, *Peter Chrysologus*, and *Bernard* ; and this is all the Proof he alledges. Now tho' these Authors were all of his Mind, (which yet, upon reading what he quotes from 'em, I think they are not) it is surely a strange way of proving the Pope's *Infallibility*, that Popes themselves have said they were *infallible* : And his three other Authors come too late to be credited in a Question of this Importance. And yet after all, his Proof that this is the meaning
at

of the Text before us, is not so weak, but that the Proof that this cannot be the meaning of it, is as strong.

The time was now at hand, when our Saviour was to be betray'd into the Hands of his Enemies, and by them to be put to Death: This he knew would prove a severe Trial of that Faith and Trust which his Disciples had repos'd in him. He knew St. *Peter's* forward warm Temper, which (tho' he meant honestly) dispos'd him to trust too much to the Strength of his own Resolutions, and not to watch so carefully, and pray so earnestly for divine Aids, as he ought to have done. Our Lord foresaw (it should seem) the Temptation with which St. *Peter* would be assaulted, and that he would succumb under it. Thus the Case stood when our Saviour spake these Words: Addressing himself to *Peter*, as the Person most in danger, he tells him, That his approaching Sufferings and Death, wou'd be made use of by Satan as a strong Temptation to persuade him and his Brethren to forsake and deny their Master: So that they all needed our Lord's Prayers upon this Occasion, and no doubt he pray'd for them. But as for you *Peter*, (says our Lord) whose Trial will be peculiarly strong, and whose Temper of Mind exposes you to more than ordinary Danger in the time of Trial; I have prayed for you especially, *that your Faith may not fail*: That, tho' you may be weak and timorous enough to deny that you belong to me, or have had any thing to do with me; yet that you may not wholly forsake my Service, and renounce the Profession of my Religion. This is the plain Design and Meaning of the Words; which were spoken to St. *Peter*, and belong to him only: Nor is there the least Shadow of Reason to suppose, that they at all relate to Popes; St. *Peter's* Successors, as they are call'd. If they assure us of the Indefectibility of the Faith of all his Successors; I

would fain know, why not of his Successors in the See of *Antioch* (where he is said to have been Bishop seven Years, before he was Bishop of *Rome*) as well as of those in the See of *Rome*? And yet placing *Infallibility* at *Antioch*, as well as at *Rome*, would spoil all. I will only add, that if the *Infallibility* of *Peter*, and his pretended Successors is assur'd to us by our Saviour's praying that *his Faith might not fail*; then every Man whose Faith fails not, must be *infallible*: And since it has been prov'd, concerning several of St. *Peter's* Successors, that their Faith has actually fail'd, (even in the Sense in which the Papists themselves understand these Words) it certainly follows, that these Words of Christ to *Peter*, neither do, nor were ever design'd to assure us of the *Infallibility* of his Successors.

Your time will not allow me, to consider particularly the Texts of Scripture which our Adversaries urge, to prove this favourite and capital Point: If it wou'd, I think I could easily shew you it wou'd be difficult to find any one of the wildest Enthusiasts that have ever appear'd in the World, quoting Scripture in confirmation of his Dreams, more absurdly, more impertinently, or to a Sense more foreign to that which the Holy Ghost design'd, than the Papists do, when they go about to prove their *Infallibility* thence. Let me only put you in mind, that many of the Texts alledg'd by them relate to the Church in general, as consisting of all true Believers; and therefore will serve as well to prove that every particular good Christian is *infallible*, as that the Pope or the Church of *Rome* is so. Others of 'em are design'd to represent the Duty of the Ministers of the Christian Church, and the Ends for which that Office was instituted; without designing at all to intimate, that the Ministers wou'd never neglect their Duty, and swerve from the design of their Office: And yet

yet without supposing this last, the Arguments drawn from hence, will all be found to be sophistical and fallacious. Lastly, others of them mean nothing more than to recommend to private Christians the shewing that Respect and Regard to their Ministers, which is due to them so long as they continue diligent and faithful in the Execution of their Office; without so much as hinting at any *Dominion*, or *Infallibility*, or *Authority*, (properly so called) that Christ has conferr'd upon them. Let these things be remember'd, and applied to the Texts quoted by the Church of *Rome* to prove the Point we are upon; and they will be found to be the Keys, which will not only open to us the true meaning of such Texts, but effectually convince us, there is not any one of them that proves their *Infallibility*.

There is one thing more very pertinent to our present purpose, which deserves to be consider'd: Among the many Texts of Scripture quoted by our Adversaries in this Controversy, some are alledg'd to prove the *Infallibility* of the Pope, separately and singly consider'd as *St. Peter's* Successor, Such as these, e. g. * *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, &c.* † *I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, &c.*-----Again, others of these Texts are alledg'd to prove the *Infallibility* of General Councils, whether with the Pope as a Member of them, or without him: Such as these; ‡ *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.*-----** *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*-----†† *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, &c.*---‡‡ *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*----- Lastly, there are

* Matt xvi. 18, 19.

† Luke xxii. 32.

‡ Luke x. 16.

** Matt. xviii. 20.

†† Acts xv. 28.

‡‡ Matt. xxviii. 20.

are others of these Texts, which if they prove any thing, prove the *Infallibility* of the Church in general, or of any particular Church: Such as these; * *If he neglect to hear the church, let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican.*----- † *The church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of truth.* Now concerning these Texts taken all together, and as made use of by the Church of *Rome*; I say, either that they prove nothing, or they prove too much; even so much as will overthrow the whole *Romish* System. They design to prove *Infallibility* by 'em: I confess, in my Opinion they mean nothing like it: But if they do, some of them must prove that the Pope is *infallible*; others of 'em that a General Council is so; and others that the Church either universal or a particular one, has this Privilege: And all these Propositions must be true, they being all suppos'd to be confirm'd by Scripture. But is not this a great deal more than the Church of *Rome* desires to see proved, or will admit to be true? Do they like to have their *Infallibility* thus widely spread, and laid as it were in common? Will the Pope own that a Council has it; or a Council that the Pope has it, and they themselves have no share in it? Or will either Pope or Council admit, that a particular Congregation of Christians, or a few Christian Bishops got together, are endow'd with *Infallibility*? Thus it must be, if they interpret Scripture right: And yet if it is thus, the whole Fabrick of the Church of *Rome's Authority* and *Infallibility* is demolish'd.

I should now go on to take Notice of their other Arguments, which (as they say) unanswerably prove the *Infallibility* of the Church: Such as these: ‡ If the Church may err, why do we (as the Creed does) call her *Holy*? A Church united in the Profession of any Error, is so far from deserving that Character, that on the contrary, it is a wicked

* Matt. xviii. 17. † 1 Tim. iii. 15. ‡ Card. Richelieu, L. i. c. 13.

wicked Assembly.----- Again; * if the Church, particularly the Church Representative, or the Body of Pastors, may err, why do they, when met in Council, denounce their Anathema's against such as refuse to receive or submit to their Decrees? If they be supposed fallible in making them, this is such a piece of Wickedness as they would never be guilty of.---Again; † If the Church could err, she might entirely fail; which is directly contrary to express Promises of Christ, and therefore she must be owned to be infallible.---Again; ‡ They argue the Church's Infallibility, from her perpetual Visibility: The true Church (say they) must always be visible and knowable; but if she could err, she could no longer be known to be the true Church. I hope there is no great danger of any one's being perverted by Proofs of this sort; for I think verily it requires no great Skill to confute them. They are argued by no less Names than Cardinal *Bellarmino* and Cardinal *Richelieu*; and therefore (were it not for fear of trespassing too much upon your Patience) I would give you what, I apprehend, would be full Answers to them. But I must forbear. There is one other Argument which they boast so much of, and have so often successfully urg'd for perverting some to their Church, and confirming others in it, that I think I ought not wholly to pass it by, especially since in some former Parts of this Discourse, I have led you to expect it should be taken notice of and answer'd. It is to this purpose:

Must it not be horrid impiety, to suppose, that divine Providence has so little Concern for, and the blessed Redeemer so little Care about the Welfare of his Church, as to have left no certain infallible Method of deciding all Controversies, coming at Truth and the true Sense and Meaning of Scripture?

* *Bellarmino*. de Eccles. Milit. L. 3. c. 14. §. *Tertio obligamur*.

† *Card. Richelieu*, ubi Sup. &c. c. 4.

‡ *Id. Ib.* c. 5.

ture? If the Church is not a *visible* and *infallible* Tribunal, always in a Condition to determine Differences, what must become of *Her* ; what must become of Truth and Christianity itself? Will there not a thousand Heresies be broach'd, that must tear out her very Bowels, rend in pieces the seamless Coat of Christ, darken Truth, and make Error triumphant ; shake the Faith of Christians, and fill their Minds with endless Doubts and Uncertainty? There must therefore be somewhere a *Judge* to pronounce and decide: Scripture is so far from ending Controversies, that it is well known to have been the Occasion of them: There's not a Heretick but what quotes it, and endeavours to impose upon weak Minds, by the false Meaning they put upon it. In many Points the Sense of it is so obscure and doubtful, that the Interpretation which Hereticks give of it, seems as plausible as that which the Church herself affixes. There must therefore be a living speaking *Judge*, to interpret this *dead*, this *unsens'd* Letter: And unless such an one be own'd and submitted to, every Tinker or Cobler must be left to judge of Christian Doctrine, and to find out the Meaning of Scripture for himself.-----Thus do they bluster. By the Noise of their Triumphs on this Occasion, one would be apt to conclude that they had gain'd a compleat Victory: And yet after all, when the Matter comes to be sifted, this Argument is as harmless an one as any of the rest they make use of. I could almost wish the Time would allow me to enlarge on the following Observations ; which tho' I can do no more than just suggest them, will furnish you with Materials for a full Answer to any one who may attempt to pervert you by so fallacious an Argument.

1. That the *Impiety* talk'd of, falls to their share, who thus boldly prescribe to God and the Redeemer, what they ought to have done, and what they

they must be suppos'd to have done, for the Welfare of the Church: And that we Protestants shew much more Reverence and Modesty, when we turn the Argument upon our Adversaries, and tell them, God has no where commission'd, or pointed out, such an *infallible Judge* as they talk of; and therefore we can't be persuaded that such an one is necessary.

2. That such a *Judge* as they talk of, can never be fit to determine *all* Controversies; till it is first agreed by the contending Parties, that he is *infallible*. For, one of the most important Controversies now subsisting in the Christian World is, Whether there be any such *Judge*? and *Where he is*? Now it would be very absurd to send me to one, whom I am not yet suppos'd to believe *Infallible*, to be determin'd by him whether he is *Infallible*, or not.

3. There can be no Necessity of such a *Judge* to determine *all* Controversies in Religion, because it is not necessary that *all* such Controversies should be decided. There are a great many disputed Points and different Opinions, which neither affect our Interest in the Favour of God, nor are at all inconsistent with the *Peace* of the Church; or that *Unity* among its Members, which Christ the Head of the Church so earnestly recommends.

4. If a Judgment may be form'd of what *wou'd* be hereafter, by what *has been* heretofore; we may conclude that such a *Judge*, tho' he were to be found, would neither prevent *Heresies* from arising, nor put an End to all *Controversies*. Our blessed Saviour was such a *Judge*; able *infallibly* to decide in all Cases, and yet the Jewish Church in his Days run into many Errors; and among the rest, that pernicious one of mistaking and rejecting the Messiah.--- If it be objected that this was, because they did not own him as such a *Judge*; the Answer is obvious: That since our Lord gave at least as good
Evi-

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Evidence of his being *Infallible*, as any other can pretend to give, it is at least as likely that the *Infallibility* of any other will be, as that his shou'd have been disown'd. The Apostles were (it is allow'd) under the Guidance of an infallible Spirit in all things relating to the Kingdom of Christ, and the Propagation of his Religion in the World; and yet *Heresies* sprang up in their Days: Nay, and St. *Paul* (it seems) thought them not only unavoidable, but that Providence suffer'd them to arise, * *that they which are approved might be made manifest.* ---- There were Divisions among the *Corinthians* even after all the Pains St. *Paul* had taken to restore *Unity* and *Peace* among them. ----- Nay, in the Church of *Rome* herself, notwithstanding all her Boasts of an *infallible living Judge*, to whom all her Members may have recourse, there are (for ought I see) as different, as inconsistent Opinions, as are to be found among Christians, who own no such Judge.

5. And Lastly. Every meek, humble, sincere Lover of, and Enquirer after Truth, may hope for, and reckon upon such Assistance of the Spirit of God, as will enable him by the Rule of Scripture to judge of, and determine for himself all such Controversies in Religion, as it is absolutely necessary to his Salvation to judge, or believe, or determine any thing about. If a Man thus dispos'd, and with the Promise of such Assistance, is not secure from all fatal Error, and in the way to come at all Truth, necessary for him to know; I see no other Method by which he can be so; I am sure the way of *Authority* and *Infallibility* won't do it; and if I don't strangely mistake the Meaning and Design of many Passages of Scripture, this Method will do it.

If I had time, I should go on now, and consider the Proofs pretended to arise from the Testimonies

nies

nies of the Fathers: For tho' the Writings were long in the almost sole Possession of the Friends to the *Romish* Cause; and during several dark Ages were so little read, or attended to, that *They* had Opportunity to mangle and alter, to blot out, and foist in, as might best serve their Cause and support their Pretention; nay, tho' gross Falsifications of these Writings have been pointed out to them, and prov'd upon 'em; yet still, even in the Condition they now are, it might from them be plainly shewn, that for several Hundreds of Years after Christ, the Fathers never dream'd, nor made mention of, any such *Authority* or *Infallibility* as the Church of *Rome* now claims.

Nay farther, if I had time, I cou'd lay before you what must (I think) be a sufficient Inducement to any impartial Mind, either to believe that the Church of *Rome* herself suspects or doubts of her own *Infallibility*; or else to condemn her for having acted the most unjust, the most unmotherly, the most absurd part in the World, for not having employ'd it in a proper Manner, and for the kindest and most useful Purposes. Why does she suffer, and sometimes direct, her own Doctors to go on writing *fallible* Commentaries on Scripture, as contradictory and inconsistent, as any of those written by Protestants? Why does she not once for all bless the World with an *infallible* Interpretation of the whole Bible, and an exact Account of all the Church's *unwritten Traditions*? Why does she not find out an *infallible* Method for inducing all the World to hearken and submit to her *infallible* Decisions? She has, I know, found out, and made use of, one Method for this purpose; she has Censur'd, Curs'd, Spoil'd, Imprison'd, Banish'd, Tortur'd, Committed to the Flames, and Doom'd to Hell and Damnation, to promote this hopeful Design; but tho' she has been too successful, she is
yet

yet far, I hope, very far, from having fully carry'd her Point.

O ROME! Haughty, Cruel ROME! * Thou hast long glorified thyself, lived deliciously, and said in thy heart, *I sit a Queen, and am no Widow, and shall see no sorrow*: But † the multitude of Sorceries, and abundance of Incantments, are found with thee: ‡ The Kings and Inhabitants of the Earth have been made drunk with the Wine of thy Fornication: § Thou thyself art drunken with the Blood of the Saints and Martyrs of Jesus: Therefore ** shall thy Plagues come upon thee in one Day, Death, and Mourning, and Famine; yea, thou shalt be utterly burnt with Fire; for strong is the LORD GOD who judgeth thee.----- In the mean while, and till that Day of Recompense comes,

May Almighty God, who has often, and almost by Miracle, preserv'd these Nations, from falling again into her Clutches, and feeling the Effects of her deep Malice and savage Cruelty; still protect, still defend us! May the *Protestant Interest*, the Cause of *Truth*, and *Virtue*, and *Liberty*, be establish'd, and own'd, and propagated! May the Blessing of Heaven rest upon all *Protestant* Princes and States; and especially upon our most Gracious Sovereign King GEORGE, and every Branch of his August FAMILY! May we and all his Subjects stand fast by, and be secur'd in the Possession of, that Christian Liberty with which Christ has made us free; And finally, for the Honour and Advancement of that pure and uncorrupted Christianity which we profess; may we all of us take care to get our Minds and Tempers form'd, our whole Conduct and Behaviour regulated, by the generous, human, excellent Principles and Precepts of it! God of his infinite Mercy grant it, for the Sake of Jesus Christ, &c. Scrip-

* Rev. xviii. 7.

† Isai. xlvi. 9. ‡ Rev. xvii. 2. § Rev. xvii. 6. ** Rev. xviii. 8

Scripture and Tradition considered:

I N A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D A T

Salters-Hall, Feb. 6, 1734-5.

With ENLARGEMENTS.

By *SAMUEL WRIGHT*, D. D.

In hanc insipientiam cadunt, qui cum ad cognoscendam veritatem aliquo impediuntur obscuro, non ad propheticas voces, non ad apostolicas literas, nec ad evangelicas auctoritates, sed ad seipfos recurrunt.

EPHES. ii. 20.

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, JESUS CHRIST himself being the chief corner-stone.

THE foregoing Discourses against the Pretensions of the *Romanists*, have given you an Account of their setting up a *Kingdom of this World*, under the Name and Notion of a *Church*; which they assert, is the only Church that hath Salvation in it, and the *Keys* of Heaven and Hell committed to its Rulers and Pastors.

stors. In one *Discourse*, the *Notes* and *Marks*, which they bring to prove themselves the *True* and *only* Church of CHRIST, have been examined; and the Falshood of their Ways of arguing from thence, was shewn. In another *Discourse*, their grievous Usurpation and Iniquity was exposed in placing at the Head of their Church a *sovereign Pontiff*; whom they make, very unjustly, Successor to St. Peter, as if he had a Power superior to the other *Apostles*, and superior to the Kings of the Earth; yea, whose *decrees*, and *dispensing* Powers, are advanced above all that ever were called Gods in this World. In a *third Discourse*, the pretended *Authority* and *Infallibility* of this Church, (that is, of the Pope and his Councils) you have had fairly represented, and very largely exposed.

My Province now is, to set before you the *true* and *only Foundation* upon which the *Christian Catholick Church* is built; with the Necessity of our adhering to the *Scriptures*, through Faith in CHRIST, for our eternal Salvation. So that my present Business will be to prove the *Perfection*, and *Perspicuity* of the Holy Scriptures; and the Reason that we have to receive them as the *Word of God*, without depending upon the *Testimony* of the Church of Rome, or admitting their *Traditions* as necessary to be received together with the sacred Writings.

All their usurped *Authority*, the Doctrine of the Pope's *Supremacy*, and their confining the Title of *Catholick Church* to themselves, are built upon, and supported by what they call either *apostolical*, or *ecclesiastical* Traditions.

I have therefore chosen the *Text* now read, for the subject of the *ensuing* Discourse; being better suited (in my Apprehension) than any other I could fix upon, to answer the Ends I have in View. “ And
“ are built upon the Foundation of the Apostles
“ and Prophets, JESUS CHRIST himself being
“ the chief Corner-stone.”

That

That we may see the true Meaning and Import of these Words, our Attention will be requisite for a few Minutes to the *Context*, before we come to apply ourselves to the difference betwixt us and the Papists about *Scripture* and *Traditions*.

St. Paul, in the 1st, 4th, and 5th Verses of this Chapter, tells the *Ephesians* who were converted to Christianity out of the Heathen or *gentile World*, That “ they who were dead in Trespasses and Sins, “ are quickened together with CHRIST.” Thro’ the “ rich Mercy and great Love of God,” there was a Power, proportionate to that of quickening and raising the *Dead Body* of CHRIST, manifested in their being *quickened together with him*. The Apostle therefore describes the State of *Sin*, and *Death*, and Subjection to the *Prince of this World*, (v. 2, 3.) in which they were, when the Gospel was sent by the free undeserved favour and Grace of God to *save them*; and which by the Power and Love of God became effectual to their Conversion, and to bring them into the Christian Life.

In the same mighty Power and Love we hope and trust, for the raising and quickening that Part of the World *called Christian*, where thro’ a dreadful and long Apostacy, Men are walking just as the Heathen *Ephesians* did, “ according to the Course “ of this World, according to the Prince of the “ Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh “ in the Children of Disobedience.” Amongst whom even *we* of this Protestant Kingdom, “ had “ our Conversation in Times past, in the Lusts of “ our Flesh, fulfilling the Desires (or Wills) of the “ Flesh, and of the Mind, and were by Nature “ the Children of Wrath, even as others.” The rich Mercy, the great Love wherewith God loved us, when he saved us out of such a State of Slavery, and Death, as that of Popery, should encourage us to hope for the Salvation of other Nations and People, in the Day of God’s *Power*; and whilst

we are using our best Endeavours to recommend a pure scriptural Religion, let us wait for the Manifestations of a further Power from on high, when the LORD himself shall “ consume that Wicked “ by the Spirit of his Mouth, and shall destroy “ him with the Brightness of his Coming.” A firm Persuasion that the overthrow of *Popery*, (let the Kings and Rulers of the Earth favour it as they please) shall be by a Power like that which *raised* CHRIST from *the Dead*, and first set up the Gospel Kingdom in the World, led me to this *Digression*; which will, I hope, be allow’d upon the present Occasion.

To proceed in our account of the Context: The *Gentiles* being brought into the Kingdom of GOD by pure Grace and Favour, as the *Jews* had been of Old, both were *raised together*, and made to *fit together* in the same Gospel Kingdom, which is called the Kingdom of Heaven, or *heavenly Places* in CHRIST JESUS, v. 6. They were both alike in this, that there were no Works of which either could boast; but Works for which both might have been for ever rejected and condemned. By Grace alone they were both equally privileg’d, both being saved upon the same Foot, that is, through FAITH. And this Salvation thro’ Faith, (in the whole Contrivance * and Method of it) they were ever to look upon as the *Gift of God*, and not owing to *themselves*, ver. 8. So that no such Thing as Works of *Supererogation*, or Works to be boasted of in the sight of God, and *meriting* at his Hands, are to be brought into the Gospel Scheme of being saved, v. 9. “ not of Works, lest any Man should boast.” And yet this Salvation doth necessarily include *good Works*, as the Fruit and Effect of Faith in CHRIST; for which God hath before provided, that we should both be directed and enabled to walk in them,

V. 10.

* τὸ ὅλον seems to refer to the whole Work of Salvation, and not τὸ (πίστεως) Faith, by a regular Construction.

v. 10. " For we are his Workmanship created in
 " CHRIST JESUS unto good Works, which God
 " hath before ordained, (or prepared) that we
 " should walk in them." He hath made sufficient
 Preparation for this under the Gospel.

The Matter being thus stated, and Jew and Gentile thus united, the Apostle would have the *Ephesians* mindful of their former State of *Aliens*, which he describes in the 11th and 12th Verses; and also by whom this *Union* was brought about, CHRIST JESUS; and how wonderfully it was effected, by his *Crucifixion* and *Blood*; of which a very distinct Account is given in those five Verses, from the 13th to the 18th ver. But I must not stay upon them; tho' there are several Things concerning the abolishing of the *Jewish* Rites and Ordinances, and dissolving their Church-state, as a National and Temporal Polity, that may serve to expose the *Schismatical* Principles and Practices of the Papal State and Church: In which innumerable Rites and Ordinances are set up, more *carnal* and *worldly*, than those of *Moses*; and a *temporal* Kingdom and Polity more injuriously exclusive of the Nations that refuse Subjection to them, than the *Jewish* Covenant of Peculiarity was.

To go on: CHRIST having " preached Peace to
 " them that were far off, and to them that were
 " nigh, it follows, that through him both have
 " an Access, by one SPIRIT, unto the FATHER." Here we see what Regards are due to the Ever blessed Trinity, FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, in the Affair of our Salvation. The whole Work is built upon it, and the whole Church is hereby framed together to be an holy Temple in the Lord. So that this Doctrine is to be received, not as the Doctrine of the *Roman* Church, nor as the Doctrine of any particular *Protestant* Church; but as a *Scripture Doctrine*, upon which the Universal Church is built. Where this Doctrine is received and believ-

ed, as the Scripture requires it should, producing all the genuine and saving Effects of such a Faith, what is said of the *Ephesian Church* may be applied to others; “ In WHOM (*i. e.*) (the LORD Jesus Christ) you also are builded together for an Habitation of GOD, through the SPIRIT.” Thus ends the Chapter where our *Text* is.

According to this most wise, and most extensively merciful and benevolent Constitution of Things, the *Gentiles* are taken into the same household of GOD with the *Jews*. And in every Nation, where a Number of Men are brought to believe and obey the *Gospel*, and to worship GOD according to the Ordinances thereof, they are to be look’d upon as Parts and Members of the *one Catholick Church* of Christ. Even to us in these *Isles afar off* from any Likelihood to partake such Blessings, are these glad Tidings sent: “ Ye are no more Strangers, and Foreigners, but Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of GOD.” It will reward your Pains, diligently to compare the 12th and 19th Verses of this Chapter, to take the Sense of these Expressions, as they include *all* that are in Christ Jesus *every where*: All such being now equally invested with the same Rights and Privileges, as *Fellow-citizens*, and admitted to the same nearness to GOD, as *Domesticks*.

All the Churches of Christ, being thus *made one* by him *who is our Peace*, are built upon the foundation of the *Apostles* and *Prophets*, JESUS CHRIST himself being the *chief Corner-stone*.

From this thread of St. Paul’s Discourse, concerning the *Jews* and *Gentiles* being made one, it is evident, that by the *Prophets* he means the Old Testament *Scriptures*, and by the *Apostles* the New. The whole Church of GOD, both under former Dispensations, and now under the Gospel, was, and is built, upon the Doctrine of the *Prophets*, including *Moses* as the principal and most eminent of them; and

and upon the Doctrine of the *Apostles*, including *St. Paul* who writes this with the other *Apostles*: Their doctrine (as has been said before) not their *Persons*, is the foundation upon which God hath built his Church; JESUS CHRIST being the *chief Corner-stone*, by which both Parts of the Building are *united*, and upon which they *rest*. Both Prophets and *Apostles* Center in him.

The *primary* Foundation is CHRIST. Therefore in another Text of Scripture it is said, "That other Foundation can no Man lay, than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST, 1 Cor. iii. 2." In that very Place, *Paul*, *Apollos*, and *Cephas* (or *Peter*) himself, are denied to be Foundations. They were only *Ministers* by whom Christ and the Essentials of Christianity were preached, and Workmen by whom the Church was raised; and in THIS View they themselves refer to CHRIST as the *only Foundation*. But the *Doctrines*, or *Writings* of the Prophets and *Apostles*, are the Foundation of God's Church in a *secondary* Sense; they being authorized by Christ, and qualified by the Guidance and Aids of his Infallible Spirit, to lay those Foundations thro' Faith in his Name, upon which the whole Fabrick or Superstructure should abide, and be carried on throughout all Ages of the World.

From hence, therefore, the two following Things are evident, which may comprize all that is necessary to be said on the *part* I have chosen to take in this Lecture.

I. That the Church of God, the true Church of Christ throughout all Nations, is built *intirely* upon the Scriptures. And therefore,

II. That a Church built upon *Traditions*, which are beside and against Scripture, as far as it goes off from, or opposeth the *Apostles* and *Prophets*, is a building of *Men*, formed to serve their *own Ends* and Purposes, not those of the Gospel.

I thought to have enlarged on that delightful View of our *Text*, its referring to JESUS CHRIST as the grand *Subject* and *Scope* of the Writings both of the *Prophets* and *Apostles*: And to have considered the Expression here used, Christ *himself* being the chief Corner-stone, together with those Places that style him the *Head* of the *Corner*: But so many Things have been suggested already on the *Headship* of our LORD JESUS, and his being *sole* King in his own Kingdom, without any *vicarious* Governor, or *visible* Head of his Church here on Earth, that I need not take up any of the present Time in discoursing on this Part of the Subject. I shall therefore now keep to the two general Heads I have mention'd.

I. The Church of God, consisting of the *whole* Body of *Christians*, is built *intirely* upon the *Scriptures*.

This hath been insisted on already, and in one view or other will be referr'd to in all our Discourses against the *Romanists*. But what I have now to offer, will be in a manner quite different from what has been said before; but yet so as to be a further and fuller Confirmation of the foregoing Discourses.

By the *Scriptures* we mean the Books of the *Old* and *New Testament*, as they are now received, and allowed to be *canonical* by the Church of *Rome*, as well as by ourselves, excepting what we commonly call the *Apocrypha*. For tho' the Apocryphal Books may be read "for example of *Life*, and Instruction of *Manners*, yet they are no Part of the Canon of *Scripture*, nor is any Doctrine to be established by them."

As to the pretended *Authority* of the Church of *Rome*, to settle the *Canon* of *Scripture*, and to determine what *is* *Scripture*, and what *not*, so much hath been said already, that I need not stay to expose

pose their Pretensions in a Way of *Confutation*. The Reasons that we have to believe *the Scriptures* are the Word of God, and to receive the present *Books* of the *Old* and *New Testament* as genuine, without our having any regard to the *Roman Church* as such, will appear in the Sequel of this Discourse.

When we assert that the Church of CHRIST is built upon the Scriptures, the Church of *Rome* doth not oppose us, while they allow, ' That the ' Scripture is to be received by all Christians as the ' *infallible Word of God.*' But when they say, that the Scripture is not a *sufficient Foundation* to build the Church upon, without their Interpretations and Additions; in Opposition to that we say, ' That the true Church of Christ, throughout all ' Nations, is built INTIRELY upon the Scripture.' That is, either upon those Things which are *expressly contained* in Scripture, or such Things as are *plainly proved* from thence, by Consequences that are referr'd to every Man's Reason and Conscience, as in the Sight of God.

This is what we mean by a *Judgment* of *private Discretion*, upon which Protestants very justly oppose the Impositions, and pretended Powers of the *Roman Church*, in matters that concern our Salvation.

1. I shall therefore shew, in Opposition to *Po-pery*, the Sufficiency or *Perfection* of Scripture to inform and guide us in all *necessary* Things.

We say, that " Whatsoever is not read in Scrip-
" ture, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be
" required of any Man, that it should be believed
" as an Article of Faith, or be thought requisite,
" or necessary to Salvation." *Article VI.* The *Roma-nists* say, that ' All Things necessary to Salvation are
' not contained in Scripture, but that a number of
' Articles, relating both to Faith, Worship, and
' Manners, are to be received from their Church."

The *Council of Trent* declared, that the *oral Tra-ditions*

ditions of the Catholick Church (meaning the *Roman*) were to be received with EQUAL PIETY and reverence, as the *Books* of the *Old* and *New Testament* *; and he that despiseth the said Traditions, is accursed †.

But I need not take pains to prove this, since it is not denied by those that are now endeavouring to make Converts to *Popery* in this City. In a little Pamphlet which hath been put into many Hands of late, it is asked, *Why should not the scripture alone be the rule of faith?* And the Answer there given, in one part of it, is, *Because several necessary Articles are either not AT ALL contained in Scripture, or at least are not plain in the Scripture without the Help of Tradition.* Of Tradition we shall speak hereafter. The quoting of this Passage here, is only to shew, that their asserting the *Insufficiency of Scripture to Salvation*, is what they openly avow and teach, even in a *Protestant Country*.

Now in this, let their own Confession, of the *Scriptures* being the *infallible Word of God*, be their Confutation. For that infallible Word declares, “That all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Re-
proof, for Correction, for Instruction in righteousness, that the Man of God may be PERFECT, (or may be perfected) thoroughly furnished
unto ALL good Works, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.” If the *Man of God* here be understood of a *Pastor*, or *Teacher* of others, then it is expressly declared, that the Scripture is given to perfect the Pastor or Teacher for his Office, and thoroughly to furnish him for all good Works belonging to his Station. That whatever is needful in a way of *Doctrine* relating to Matters of Truth and Faith, or in a way of *Reproof* to shew Men their Errors, or in a way of *Correc-
tion*

* Pari pietatis affectu, ac reverentia, suscipit ac veneratur.

† Si quis — Traditiones prædictas sciens & prudens contempserit, Anathema sit. Concil. Trid. Sess. 4. Decr. de Scripturis.

tion to convict Men of Sin and of their Faults, or in a way of *Instruction* as to their Duty, to teach them all Righteousness; in all these Things the Scripture is to *perfect* the Man of God, and *thoroughly* to furnish him for *every good Work*; and therefore it must contain every Thing necessary to such Purposes. Consequently if any Thing taught by the Man of God, or pretended Man of God, be not in the Scripture, nor to be evidently and convincingly *deduced* from thence, it is not *necessary* to Salvation. Yea, by this infallible Word of God, such Man is out of *the way* of Salvation *himself*, that does require any Thing to be received as of *equal Authority* with the Gospel. If an *Apostle*, or an *Angel* from Heaven was to be accursed for doing this, surely a Bishop or Missionary of *Rome* cannot expect to fare better, in declaring that there are *several NECESSARY Articles NOT contained in Scripture*. “ Though we, (saith the Apostle) or an Angel
 “ from Heaven preach any other gospel, than that
 “ which we *have preached* unto you, let him be ac-
 “ cursed.” To impress this the more, and to declare the Certainty of the Curse Apostolical coming upon such, it is immediately repeated, (not in speaking only, but in writing, of which there would have been less need, if the importance of the Thing had not required it :) “ As we said before, so say I
 “ now again, if any Man preach any other Gos-
 “ pel unto you, than that ye have received, let
 “ him be accursed, *Gal. i. 8, 9.*

Perhaps it will be here replied, That the Church of *Rome* alloweth the *Sufficiency* of Scripture to *perfect* the Man of God, provided it be *interpreted* as the *Catholick Church* directs, meaning *themselves*; and that there be also, with them, a holding fast those *Traditions* to which this written Word refers.

But will this free them from the charge of Inconsistency, and *Self-contradiction*? They profess to receive

ceive the *Scripture* (that is, the Word *written*) as the infallible Word of GOD. This Word declares, that (as written) it is profitable to all those Purposes that shall make the Man of GOD *perfect, thoroughly* furnished to *all good Works*. Then they say, That there are *other Articles* necessary to make the Bishop or Pastor *perfect*, which are *not contained* in the Word written, but are preserved and handed down from one Age to another by Tradition.

Now what can be an Absurdity, and Self-contradiction, if this be not;--- That the *written* Word of GOD is infallibly true, which says, The *Scriptures* are able to make Men *wise to Salvation* thro' Faith in Christ Jesus, and to make the *Man of GOD perfect*: And yet that they are *NOT able* to make the Man of GOD *perfect* without other *necessary Articles* added to them.

The *Romanists*, to palliate this Inconsistency, and prevent the Offence it must needs give, if it was clearly discerned, here plead, That the *Scripture* itself refers to *Traditions*, which are to be *held fast*, as well as the Things that are *written*. For which they quote a Passage out of the second Epistle to the *Thessalonians*; "Therefore Brethren
" stand fast, and hold the Traditions which ye have
" been taught, whether by Word or our Epistle." The true and full Meaning of that Place, will be set before you by and by. Nothing is needful to be said here, save only to observe, That by the *Romanists* Explication of this Text, they make the *Scripture* contradict itself; as if it declared in one Place, That the Things written are *sufficient to Salvation* through Faith in Christ, and to *perfect* the Man of GOD; and then in *another* Place, require the holding fast Traditions taught by WORD ONLY, which were to be in all Ages *additional* to those Things that are *written*; for this is their Explication: Whereas the *Scripture* evidently speaks of the *same Things* that were taught by the Apostles, both
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in *Word* and *Writing*; and therefore whether they were received from *THEM*, in one Way or the other, the *Theſſalonians* were required to hold them faſt.

But if the *Romiſh* Church can throw their own Inconſiſtencies and Abſurdities upon the Scripture, they do not ſtick to do it, however they expoſe that ſacred Book to Contempt. The more Infidels are led to cavil againſt it, and to deny the Truth of it, the more *neceſſary* do Papiſts make the Teſtimony and Authority of their Church: And well pleas'd they are if this Point be gained, however unfairly the Scripture is treated either by themſelves or others.

Here lies the Head-ſpring and main Support of *Popery*: To ſet the Scriptures at *variance*, and to excite a Variety of Opinions and warm Diſputes amongſt Men thereupon; to which, in the critical and rational Way, they are always ready to lend their Aſſiſtance on *either Side*; and then make a *Judge* of *Controverſies* neceſſary to determine whoſe Opinion ſhall ſtand, and be confirmed by the Stamp of Authority. And this Judge of Controverſies they make *infallible*, ſo as to abide by his Decisions, though they prove to be contrary to *expreſs Scripture*. In this, they aſſume a Power beyond that of God himſelf, and therefore expoſe themſelves to a juſt Contempt, in pretending to make both Parts of a *Contradiſtion* true. For what the Scripture aſſerts, they ſay is infallibly true, and yet what their Church determines, (though it happen to be contrary to Scripture) they ſay is infallibly true alſo.

Erasmus would have put the Church of *Rome* into a Way to have ſecured their *Credit* and *Power* much better, (when ſo many Nations were breaking off from them in the Beginning of the Reformation) if his Sentiments had been of ſufficient Weight with them. He would have had them to make no Arti-
cles

cles of Faith necessary upon the *Authority* of the *Church*, but what are made necessary in *Scripture*; which if they had been so wise as to comply with, they had got clear of a great Number of Articles by which they have been carried to set one *Infallibility* against another. His Sentiments are worth reciting, as they are preserved in one of his *Epistles*: * “ This
 “ would reconcile People to the Church of *Rome*,
 “ if all Things, says he, were not so particularly
 “ defined, and made a Matter of Faith, which we
 “ would have to belong to it; but those only which
 “ are *evidently express’d* in the holy Scriptures, or
 “ without which we do not see any *Way to be saved*.
 “ To this Purpose, a few Things may be suffi-
 “ cient: And a few Things may be sooner persuaded,
 “ than a great many. Now out of one Article, (as
 “ he goes on) we make *six hundred*; some of which
 “ are

* Quin & illud, mea sententia, complures populos conciliaret ec-
 clesie Romanæ, — si non passim quælibet sic definiantur, ut veli-
 mus ad fidei negotium pertinere; sed ea duntaxat, quæ evidenter ex-
 pressa sunt in sacris literis, aut sine quibus non constat ratio salutis no-
 stræ. Ad hæc pauca sufficiunt, & pauca citius persuadentur pluribus.
 Nunc ex uno articulo sexcentos facimus, quorum aliqui tales sunt, ut
 citra periculum pietatis vel nesciri possint, vel ambigi. Atque sic est
 mortalium ingenium, quod semel definitum est, tenemus mordicus.
 Porro philosophiæ *Christiana* summa in hoc sita est, ut intelligamus
 omnem spem nostram in Deo positam esse, qui gratis nobis largitur
 omnia per filium suum *Jesum*: Hujus morte nos esse redemptos, in
 hujus corpus nos insitos esse per baptismum, ut mortui cupiditatibus
 hujus mundi, ad illius doctrinam & exemplum sic vivamus, ut non so-
 lum nihil admittamus mali, verum etiam de omnibus bene merea-
 mur. Et si quid inciderit adversi, fortiter toleremus spe futuri præmii,
 quod omnes pios haud dubie manet in adventu *Christi*: Ut ita semper
 progrediamur à virtute in virtutem, ut nihil tamen nobis arrogemus,
 sed quicquid est boni Deo transcribamus. Hæc potissimum sunt ani-
 mis hominum inculcanda, sic ut velut in naturam transeant. Quod
 si qui volent circa naturam divinam, aut circa hypostasim *Christi*, aut
 sacramenta quædam abstrusiora rimari, quo magis attollant mentem
 in sublime, & à rebus humilioribus abducant, hæcenus liceat, ut non
 statim quod huic aut illi visum fuerit, cogantur omnes profiteri. Quem-
 admodum ex loquacibus syngraphis citius nascitur controversia, sic
 ex plurimis definitionibus nascitur diffidentia. *Epist. Erasmi Rot. Jo-*
anni Slecht & Bohemo Sec. Ed. Lug. Bat. 1703. Ep. 478. Oper. Omn. Tom.
3. p. 521.

“ are such, that without endangering Piety, we
 “ may either be ignorant, or doubt of them. And
 “ such is the Nature of Mankind, that what is
 “ once defined they hold so as to bite and devour one
 “ another. But when all’s done, the Sum of Chri-
 “ stianity lies in this, (mind what he says) that we
 “ understand all our Hope to be placed in God, who
 “ freely gives us all Things by his Son JESUS: By
 “ whose Death we are redeemed, into whose Body
 “ we are planted by Baptism, that being dead to the
 “ Lust of this World, we may live according to
 “ his Doctrine and Example; not only abstaining
 “ from all Evil, but endeavouring to deserve well
 “ of every Body: And if any Adversity happen,
 “ that we bear it courageously, in Hope of a future
 “ Reward, which, without doubt, waits for all
 “ pious Persons at the coming of Christ. And that
 “ we make such Progress from Virtue to Virtue, as
 “ notwithstanding to arrogate nothing to our
 “ selves, but to ascribe all the Good that is in us,
 “ or that we can do, unto GOD.-----These Things
 “ are chiefly to be inculcated.-----But if any will
 “ search into those Things that are more abstruse,
 “ about the divine Nature, the Hypostasis of Christ,
 “ &c. that they may raise their Minds the higher,
 “ and draw them from Things below; let them do
 “ so, provided that every Body be not compell’d to
 “ believe what seems good to this or that Person.
 “ For as out of large Deeds Law-suits sooner arise,
 “ so by many Definitions of Things Differences are
 “ begotten.”

Had this Advice been taken, it would have pre-
 vented numberless *Contradictions* which there are
 betwixt the infallible Declarations of *Scripture*, and
 the pretendedly infallible Decisions of the *Roman*
Church. Most agreeable was this Advice to the
Oration of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor,
 when he would have *fixed a Rule* for the Council of
Nice to keep to; (and no other Rule should ever be
 allowed

allowed by the Civil Power, for deciding Matters in *ecclesiastical Councils*;) “ Since they had the
 “ Doctrine of the holy Spirit recorded in *Writing*,
 “ he tells them, that the Books of the Evangelists
 “ and Apostles, and the Oracles of the old Pro-
 “ phets, evidently taught what we were to think
 “ of the divine Majesty. Therefore laying aside
 “ seditious Contention, he would have Matters
 “ determin’d by the *divine Writings*.” *Theod. Hist.*
 l. 1. c. 7.

But the Ends of the *Pope* and his *Clergy* could not be answered by bringing Articles of Faith into so narrow a Compass as the Scripture had done. And therefore they went into the shameful *Expedient* of taking away the *Bible* from the People; that their Clergy might have the delivering out of such Passages only as should serve their Purposes; and might keep those Things lock’d up, and out of Sight, that would discover their *Absurdities* and *Contradictions*.

In thus denying the free Use of *Scripture*, their Violence is not to be endured by those that know how directly they go against the Authority of God; and against many express Texts in both Testaments, that require Men to *read* the Scriptures diligently, and *teach* them to *their Children*; and to keep to the *Law* and to the *Testimony*, declaring that they who speak not *according to this Word* have no *Light in them*: And that all Christians have it in Charge from their Lord to *search the Scriptures*, as the acknowledged Fountains of eternal Life. And those Things which were deliver’d by the first Witnesses to Christianity, St. *Luke* declares were put into *Writing*, that he who had been instructed in them before, might know them with *Certainty*. And the Apostles direct their *Epistles* to the *Saints* and *faithful Brethren*; and expressly require that they should be read *unto all*. And in the closing Book of Scripture, he is pronounced “ blessed that readeth,
 “ and they that hear the Words of it.”

It is not, as I said, to be endured by those that know these Things; to be told they have no Right to this Blessing of reading the Scriptures, and that they are not fit to be trusted with Bibles in their own Tongue. However the Papists may colour this Matter, or represent the Sense of the Church of *Rome*, in those Places where they see Bibles in every common Hand and House; yet the Use of the Bible is prohibited upon *severe Penalties* in all Popish Countries. *Azorius*, a Man of great Fame in the 16th Century, (whose Merit as a Linguist, Scripturist, and moral Philosopher, is highly extoll'd amongst the Jesuits, amongst whom he was Rector of several Colleges) declares, that *it is Heresy to say the Scriptures ought to be translated into vulgar Languages*. And this he asserts at the same Time that he admits *all were allow'd to read the Scriptures for several hundred Years*.^{*} And another of their learned Men yields to *Erasmus*, that the Scriptures *were of old translated into the vulgar Tongues*, and that the *Fathers*, such as *St. Chrysostom* and *St. Jerom*, earnestly exhorted the People to read them; but the Case is alter'd, since such *Mischief* comes by reading the Scriptures.[†] The Council of *Trent* leaving it to the Pope to publish the *Index* of prohibited Books, all Persons are forbidden, by the *fourth Rule* prefix'd to that *Index*, the Use of the Scripture in the vulgar Tongue without a particular License; and whosoever presumes to do it, [such a sad wicked Thing it is to search the Scripture without their License] *he is not to receive Absolution, unless he first give up his Bible*. And one of their best Writers, upon the Scriptures in *Latin*, I mean *Estius*, tho' he is forc'd to allow, from *Timothy's Mother* and *Grandmother* instructing him, when a Child, in the holy Scriptures, that *Women* are not to be wholly deprived of the Use of the Scriptures; yet he presently adds,

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that

^{*} Instit. moral. l. 8. c. 26.

[†] Alph. à Cast. l. 1. c. 13.

that *this is to be understood according to the Rule of the Roman Church*, (which I have just mentioned, and to which he refers) *to extend only to such as are judg'd out of danger of being hurt* * by their reading of them. And who those Licensers are like to confine such a favourable Judgment to, you need not to be told.

But instead of bringing more Testimonies to attest this, it will turn to much better Account to answer their *pretended Reason* for depriving the common People of the Use of their *Bibles*.

This brings me to consider,

2. The *Perspicuity* or *Plainness* of the sacred Writings, in opposition to the *Popish* Representation of them.

Here it is alledg'd, that St. *Peter* hath assured us there are some Things in St. *Paul's* Epistles “hard
“ to be understood; which they that are unlearned
“ and unstable *wrest*, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own Destruction.” 2 *Pet.* iii. 16. From hence the *Romanists* conclude, that the unlearned Part of Mankind are in more Danger of being hurt by having the Scriptures, than by being denied the common Use of them. There is such a Stress laid upon this in the little Piece now handed about, to which I referr'd before, that upon this Text in St. *Peter* only, the Scripture is determin'd *not to be sufficiently clear, in all Points wherein our Salvation is concerned; but that the Misunderstanding, and Misinterpreting of it, may endanger our eternal Salvation*. I have taken the very Words from the *Profession of Catholick Faith*, extracted from the *Council of Trent* by Pope *Pius IV.* which is now in Use for the reception of Converts into their Church. And, as the many learned and excellent Writings against *Popery* in former Reigns, were specially suited to the *Popish* Books then in Vogue; so I apprehend
our

* *Vid.* Est. Comment. in 2 *Tim.* iii. 15.

our more immediate and principal Concern at this Day, is to suit our Discourses to the Things that are *now* spread abroad.

I shall therefore shew, that the Words of St. *Peter* do not *at all* belong to the Controversy betwixt Protestants and Papists about the *Clearness* and *Plainness* of Scripture in Things *necessary* to Salvation. We desire to shew a becoming Concern for the Credit of the Scripture in Point of PLAINNESS, as well as *Sufficiency* and *Perfection*, whilst *they* would make it an Accuser and Contradictor of itself, in one Case as well as the other. And

1. It is to be observed, that the Words of St. *Peter* do evidently *imply* the very Thing, which the Papists bring them to *disprove*. Because some Things are hard to be understood in St. *Paul's* Epistles, and other Scriptures, and the unstable wrest them, therefore the Papists would have them kept from the *common People*: whereas it is manifest, that the Apostles allow'd and order'd the Scriptures to be free for the *Use* of the *unlearned*, or else how could they *wrest them*. But

2. It is farther evident, that those who are called *unlearned* and *unstable* by St. *Peter*, were not such as the *Romanists* call *unlearned* in this Controversy. They were not such as wanted what commonly goes by the Name of *Learning* in our Day; that is, the Knowledge of Languages, and Philosophy, human Arts and Accomplishments; but such as had not learned the main Points of Religion, or were not sufficiently acquainted with the Grounds and Principles of *Christianity*, and therefore were unstable or unsettled. Sometimes seeming to be Christians, and at other Times turning to *Judaism* or *Heathenism*: Sometimes seeming to quit their Vices, and then again as bad as the Dog turning to his Vomit, or the Sow that is washed to her wallowing in the Mire; they are St. *Peter's* own Expressions. Such as were carry'd away sometimes by one

Opinion, and in a little while by another quite contrary; like those, by St. *Paul* compar'd to "Children toss'd to and fro, and carry'd about with every wind of Doctrine." *Ephes.* iv. 14. So that St. *Peter's* Words are misapply'd shamefully, when they are interpreted concerning the *illiterate* Part of Mankind in general, instead of being applied to those that were unlearned and unsettled in the Scheme and Design of Christianity. Again,

3. These very Men are not forbidden *the Use* of the Scripture by St. *Peter*, bad as they were; nor is there any Intimation of Blame cast upon their *reading the hard Places*; but their Destruction is laid wholly upon their *wresting* or abusing them. And if the Apostle would not, upon such an Occasion, order the *Scripture* to be kept from *those Men*, certainly he never intended to deprive *others* in After-ages of such a Privilege, for the Sake of them that should in any Age abuse it, as the Unstable then did. To say that Men are not to be trusted with the Scriptures, because *some* wrest them to their own Destruction, hath just as much Sense as to say that Men ought not to be trusted with their *Liberty*, or *Estates*, because such as are of bad Principles and depraved Morals do great Mischief by those Things, and very often bring Destruction both on themselves and others. And indeed where the *Romanists* have full Power, they shew that People are as little to be trusted with *Liberty*, or *Estates*, as with their *Bibles*.

The direct contrary to this Way of arguing, is the *true Inference* to be drawn from St. *Peter's* Words. Thus: Since the unlearned and unstable wrest the hard and difficult Places of Scripture to their own Destruction, therefore we should read them *more humbly*, and *carefully*, and *diligently*. This is the Language of Reason; but sure it is the Language of Violence only, to say, therefore they
shall

shall not be read at all by the Generality of Christians.
But,

4. St. Peter does not speak of any *one Book* of Scripture, much less of the Scripture in general, as if it was *dangerously obscure*. In which are some things hard to be understood, does not refer to the *Epistles* of St. Paul, or other Books of Scripture, but to those Places that relate to the *particular Subject* St. Peter is treating of in that Chapter.* From *particular Passages* having certain [δυσνόητα] Difficulties, to represent a *whole Book* as if it was hard to be understood, is a most sophistical and false Way of arguing, easily discerned by every Man. There is one thing more to be added, which will effectually take off the pretended Objection against the *Clearness* of Scripture, as grounded upon the Words of St. Peter, viz.

5. The Things which St. Peter says are hard to be understood, and which are wrested by some Men to their Destruction, are Things that might be *let alone* without *endangering their Salvation*. So that they are not Things *necessary* to Salvation, as the *Romish Profession of Faith* suggests, that are spoken of, either with respect to St. Paul's *Epistles*, or other Scripture.

St. Peter had been writing concerning the *new Heavens* and the *new Earth*, and the Manner of the World's being *dissolved* at Christ's *second* visible Appearance, and of the long-suffering of our Lord, which is for the Salvation of all that are to be glorified with him at that Time. Concerning that awful joyful Event, St. Paul had deliver'd Things hard to be understood, throughout his *Epistles*. Such as these: "The earnest Expectation of the
" Creature waiteth for the Manifestation of the
" Sons of God." *Rom*, viii. 19. Again: "Then
" cometh the End, when he shall have deliver'd

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" up

* εν οίς cannot be construed in which *Epistles*, because επιτολὰς before is of a different Gender. Vid. Whitby in loc.

“ up the Kingdom to GOD the Father, when he
 “ shall have put down all Rule, and all Authority
 “ and Power.” 1 *Cor.* xv. 24. And again :
 “ This we say unto you by the Word of the Lord,
 “ that we who are alive, and remain to the com-
 “ ing of our Lord, shall not prevent them that
 “ are asleep.” 1 *Thess.* iv. 15. So in other Epi-
 stles, when this Subject is treated on, there are
 Things confessedly hard to be understood. But
 then, the understanding of these Things is not
necessary to the humble believing pious Christian’s
being saved at the coming of Christ.

Noah was saved, when the rest of the World
 was drown’d. And yet he might not be able to
 conceive how such a *Mass* of *Water* should come,
 as to deluge the whole Earth ; or what the *new*
Face and Appearance of the World would be, after
 that Deluge. But by an assured Expectation of the
 Event in *general*, and by a Faith unmoved in God’s
 Promise of saving him and his Family, and living
 and preaching Righteousness all the Time that he
 was preparing the Ark, he and his Family escap’d
 out of the *common Ruins*. So will it be with them
 that believe and obey the *Gospel* ; they shall be saved
 at Christ’s second Coming, though there are
 some Things they do not understand concerning
 the *Conflagration* of the World, and the *new* Dis-
 position or *Formation* of the Heaven and the Earth,
 and the Son’s giving up the *mediatorial Kingdom* to
 the Father, and the like.

These Things hard to be understood are not
 Things *necessary* to *Salvation* ; and therefore St. Pe-
 ter’s Words are not at all to the Purpose of the
Romanists, to prove that the Scriptures are *not*
sufficiently clear in all Points wherein our *Salvation*
is concerned. The Truth of the Matter is, that
 the *wresting* of these Things is more to be charged
 on their great and learned Men, who explain them
 so as to set up a *temporal Kingdom*, and to expose
 the

the whole Affair to *Scoffs* and Contempt, than to the common People's reading them, tho' they should unwillingly misinterpret them, or not be able to understand them.

I will only here add, that as to this Subject it self, [the future Dissolution of the World, with the Manner of Christ's coming to consummate all Things in the Salvation of the Righteous] the Difficulties which attend the Accounts of it, have had very great and good Effects upon *some* even in the lower Parts of Life, though they are observed to have a bad Effect upon others. The Minds of many have been *fixed*, by studying these *hard Passages*, till they have been *more thoroughly affected* with the Consideration of so stupendous an Event, than if such Difficulties had never been laid before them. And if in these very Things there is *so much* to be understood, as to make Men more diligent in their *Preparation* for the coming of Christ; then, instead of endangering, they do greatly promote their Salvation. And if in the very *hardest Things*, the Scripture be sufficiently clear to secure and help forward the Salvation of plain-hearted Men, we may well abide by the Doctrine of Protestants concerning the *Perspicuity* of Scripture, as well as the *Perfection* of it.

The *Psalmist* hath well connected these two Things, "The Law of the Lord is *perfect*, converting the Soul; the Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the Simple, *Psal.* xix. 7." The Law or Word of God has all the *Perfection* which is necessary to turn the Soul from Destructive Courses, to the Way of Life and Righteousness; and it has all the *Clearness* and *Certainty* that is necessary, as a *Testimony* or *Witness* to make the most weak, if honest Minds, wise unto Salvation.

3. I proceed to shew, that we have abundant Reason to receive the holy Scriptures as the Word of G O D, without depending upon the *Testimony* of the Church of *Rome*, or her *Traditions*.

We receive the *canonical Scripture* upon a quite different Foot, from that of its being delivered to us by the *Roman Church*. Our Evidences, that the Scripture was given by *Inspiration* of G O D, and that the Books we now receive are *genuine*, are such as would be valid, though there had never been a Church of *Rome* at all; yea, our Proofs are such as enable us to abide by the Writings of the *Old* and *New Testament*, in Opposition to all that the *Romanists* have done to corrupt them, and to provoke those Men that *have not Faith* to write and cavil against them.

We plainly see, that the two Testaments do cast such a Light upon each other, and Prophecy and History so exactly tally, notwithstanding the hundreds, yea thousands of Years distance in the Writing of them, that they are throughout directed by the Finger of G O D. And had not many things been permitted in the *Jewish Worship* and *Constitution*, purely in Consideration of the *Hardness of their Hearts*, and to prevent their falling into *Heathen Idolatry* and Superstition, those things that relate to the *Messiah* had been more generally and more clearly understood than they were. The *Author* of *Scripture* evidently appears to be *omniscient*, clearly discerning all the Actions and Operations both of *necessary* and *free* Agents, and having a perfect View of *all Events* throughout all Ages of the World. He evidently appears to be a Spirit infinitely wise and good, holy and true, displaying those Perfections in the *various Ways* of dictating his Word, amidst all the Follies, Enmities and Oppositions, Sins and Errors of Men. The Things revealed and declared are so sublime, and they are so well calculated to promote

promote *moral Virtue* and the Good of Society, and the things foretold are so much beyond all human *Forefight*; the *Miracles* wrought to confirm them are so great and numerous, and so much beyond all human *Skill* or *Might* to effect; and withal so publicly wrought, and the Facts so undeniably attested: The *Stile* of Scripture is so full of Majesty, concise and yet clear; the *Access* it hath to the *Hearts of Men* is so quick and powerful, piercing even to the dividing asunder Soul and Spirit, discerning the most secret Thoughts, and directing or counter-working the most secret Intentions: And then the great and lasting *Effects* produced by the sacred Writings, prove such a mighty Power and Energy accompanying them: And there is such a *Uniformity* throughout, in the Substance and Spirit of these Writings, notwithstanding the various Changes of Language, and Governments, and Arts, and Fashions in the World: That (all these things being put together) the Scripture by its own *Light*, and as its own *Interpreter*, shews that it was given by Inspiration of GOD. These are Proofs to us of the Truth of the Scripture in general, let the *Romanists*, or *Infidels*, speak of them well or ill.

To proceed: As to the rational Proof, that the Books we now receive are *genuine*, we draw Arguments from the Particulars *following*, which have no Relation to any such Person as the *Pope of Rome*, and which have a respect wholly to the Times *before that Church* pretended to determine what is Scripture, and what is not.

Besides the Arguments we are furnished with from the *Jews*, and from other *Writers* of antient History, to prove the Authority and Genuineness of the Books of the *Old Testament*; we judge of them by their being referr'd to, and declared to be of GOD, in the *New Testament*. This Rule must be allowed good, if the *New Testament*
Books

Books were written by Inspiration of **GOD**, and if we have also Proof sufficient of **THEIR** being handed down to us as they were written. This will abundantly satisfy all common Christians about the Old Testament, so far as the Apostles, and their Penmen, speak of the Books in the *Jewish Canon*, and quote them to confirm what they say.

Our Proofs of the *New Testament* being *genuine*, we take from historical Facts, and from antient Records; and from Writings of many Kinds, that quote the *Gospels*, the *Acts* of the Apostles, and their *Epistles*, some hundreds of Years before the *Church of Rome* pretended to have the Custody of them.

We look to the Age immediately following that of the Apostles, to such as were their Disciples, and speak of their Writings under the Names of those *very Persons* to whom they are now ascribed. And we look to the succeeding Ages, in which many Writers both *for* and *against* Christianity, cite Passages out of the *Gospels*, the *Acts*, and the *Epistles*, as we now find them in our Testaments. From these Scriptures being publish'd in a Language most *commonly spoken*, and generally read and understood; and being dispersed into various Nations, and soon *translated* into *many different Tongues*; we conclude, that if these had been *lost* (any of them) in one Place, they would be preserved in other Places; or if they had been maimed and corrupted by one Set of Men, others were still able to rectify those Errors. And we have the more Certainty in these Conclusions, from the *Heresies* and *Seets* that arose in every Age, which made Men exceeding *watchful* of each other. And we find both the Defenders and Adversaries of the Christian Faith, quoting these sacred Writings in much the same Words. *Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, shews that

that the *Jews* look'd upon these Books as the standing Records of Christianity: And *Origen's* Controversy with *Celsus*, shews that the *Heathens* allow'd these Books to contain the common Faith of Christians. This is also confirmed by the Writings of *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and others. *Origen* gives us a Catalogue of the Books of the *New Testament*. And they are set down by two Councils, viz. *Laodicea* and *Carthage*. Some of the Books now taken into the *Canon* of the *New Testament* being *question'd*, the Debates and Enquiries upon that Occasion, make the settling of the Whole as it now stands the more satisfactory and authentick. To all this we add the Confirmation of the principal Facts of the *New Testament* from *antient Authors**, who were *contemporary* with our Saviour, or his Apostles, or liv'd near their Time. And finally, the Accounts we now have of the *various Readings* of antient Manuscripts, and of the many printed Copies of the *Greek Testament* that are extant †, do all of them confirm the present *Canon* of Scripture in general, however they differ as to particular *Texts* or *Passages*.

These are Evidences of a quite different Nature from the pretended *Authority* of the Church of *Rome*, and therefore the Insinuation in the *Grounds of Catholick Doctrine* is fallacious, and not worth our farther arguing upon, *That we ought to take the Meaning and Interpretation of Scripture from the Church* they call Catholick, *because it is the same Hand from which we received the Bible itself*. This sacred Book has received no Advantage, as to its Credibility, from its falling into their Hands. But much has been done by them to lessen its Esteem, and to make Men call in question

* See *Lardner's* Credibility of the Gospel History.

† Vid. *Milii Grec. Test.* in *Differt. de Lib. N. T. & Canonis Constitutione*.

question the Truth of it; and had it not been *impracticable*, they have shewn sufficient Inclination, either to have *altered* it to serve their Designs of Power and Dominion, or else utterly to have *suppress'd* it. We may truly say of the *Roman Clergy* what our Saviour says of the *Scribes and Pharisees*, that they make “the Commandment of God” of none Effect, thro’ their Traditions.” *Matt.* xv. 6. This brings me to the other Part of the Subject, which it is expected I should enlarge upon.

II. That a Church built upon *Traditions* which are *beside* and *against* Scripture, is a Building of *Men* formed to serve their *own Ends*, not those of the *Gospel*.

I have said Traditions *beside* and *against* Scripture, to distinguish the *Traditions* upon which the Power and Superstitions of the *Roman Church* are built, from those Traditions that have their Foundation in the Scripture, and have therefore been received by the *Christian Catholick Church* in all Ages. The Word *Tradition* signifies only the *delivering* from one to another. When this is applied to the Doctrines, or Precepts, and the Ordinances of the *Gospel*, it is allowed that there are two *Ways* of delivering them, namely, by *speaking*, and by *writing*; and I may add, that some things are *delivered* and handed down from one Age to another, by certain *Actions*. Now, we do receive and continue in the Things delivered to us by *preaching*, and by *Word of Mouth*, and by such religious *Actions* as are to keep up the *Remembrance* of Christ, and his Worship and Kingdom in the World: But we receive them together with the *written* Accounts of them, and *judge* by the Scripture Orders concerning them. We try what is *spoken* and *done*, by what is *written*,

ten, and make that the only certain *Rule* both of our Faith and Actions. Every Church thus built upon *Scripture Traditions*, is in other Words built upon the Foundation of the *Apostles* and *Prophets*. But a Church built upon *unscriptural* Traditions, yea, upon *anti-scriptural* Traditions, is a Building of *Men*, raised by the Help, and at the Infligation of the *GOD* of *this World*; a Kingdom set up to overthrow the *great Design* of the Gospel, and in direct Opposition to our Saviour's Declaration, "That *HIS* Kingdom is not of this World."

They pretend, indeed, that they have *Scripture* to enforce their *Traditions*; and to this End they urge that *Text* I mention'd before: "Therefore Brethren stand fast, and hold the Traditions which ye have been taught, whether by *Word*, or our *Epistle*." *2 Thess. ii. 15.*

Let us here carefully consider what the *Apostle enjoins*, and we shall find that this very *Text* obligeth us to *hold such Traditions*, as are intirely *subversive* of all that Heap of *Papish* Traditions, which they would have the People to believe are favour'd by this Place of *Scripture* *.

The *Apostle* there speaks of *Traditions* that had been taught *before*, and were taught by the same *Spirit* and the same *Persons* that endited the *Scriptures*, "Traditions which ye *have been taught*, whether by *Word* or our *Epistle*." But the *Papists* apply this to *Traditions* many *hundreds of Years* after the whole *Canon* of *Scripture* was complete.

The *Apostle* joins *Word* and *Letter* together, that they might judge of one by the other, and not advance, or receive things *inconsistent*. The *Papists* would have this to be understood of *Traditions* that *alter* the Sense of *Scripture*, yea that expressly *contradict* it, as we shall prove presently by undeniable and most flagrant Instances. The

Apostle

* Grounds of Catholick Doctrine, p. 17. Ed. 4.

Apostle speaks of Things first delivered *orally* or by *Word of Mouth*, but afterward committed to *Writing* for greater *Certainty*. That this was the End of Writing, St. *Luke* expressly declares, (*Luke* i. 4.) when (under the Direction of St. *Paul*, as *Irenæus* and *Eusebius* inform us) he wrote his *Gospel*.

But *Chillingworth* quotes a Passage from Cardinal *Perron*, upon this Text of *holding Traditions*, that says, *We must not answer that St. Paul speaks here only of such Traditions, which, tho' not in his Epistle to the Thessalonians, yet were afterwards written, and in other Books of Scripture, because it is upon Occasion of Tradition touching the Cause of the Hindrance of the coming of Antichrist, which was never written, that this Injunction is laid down.* To this it is replied, that if the *very Tradition* there referr'd to, and which there was such a Charge to hold, be yet *lost*, because it was not written, we have very little Reason to shew any Regard to other *oral Traditions*, to which this Charge of the *Apostle* cannot have a Respect*. We have surely very good Reason to join with that Writer against the Cardinal, in his ejaculatory Thanksgiving on this Occasion: 'Blessed therefore be the Goodness of GOD, who seeing that what was not written was in such Danger to be *lost*, took Order that what was necessary should be written.'

Dr. *Whitby* hath justly observed, that this is not only a Reason why the Church of *Rome*, or even the *Church Catholick* should be esteemed no sure Preserver of *oral Traditions*; but it is a very good Argument against all Pretensions of that Kind. There is one thing that makes it very plain to me, that St. *Paul* speaks of Traditions first given by *Word of Mouth*, and afterwards in *Writing*; which is this, because in the 5th Verse of that very Chapter, where he bids the *Thessalo-*
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* Chill. No Church of one Denomination infallible.

nians hold the Traditions they had been taught, he says expressly, that what he was now actually *writing*, he had *told* them before. “Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you I told you these Things.” And in the 14th Verse he refers to what they were called to by *the Gospel*; which he speaks of as having others joined with him in the Delivery of it, *our Gospel*. Having thus TOLD you Things first, and *written* them to you afterward, we therefore add, *Brethren stand fast, and hold the Traditions which ye have been taught, whether by Word or our Epistle.*

This Text therefore obligeth us to maintain and abide by the Traditions which were received from the *Apostles themselves*, which after they were given orally, were further given in *Writing*; and we are required to stand fast in these Evidences (or in that Tradition) whereby we receive the apostolical Writings as the Word of GOD: And if we do this, then we are obliged by *these Traditions*, to reject all other *Traditions* that presume to be of *equal Authority*; and much more are we required to fly from those that are *contrary* hereto, wherever they are found. Our *renouncing* the Communion, and *protesting* against the Errors of the Church of Rome, is therefore made a Duty, an *indispensable Duty*, by this Place of Scripture, which they very imperiously, but yet very stupidly alledge, for the Necessity of receiving their *numberless Traditions*. For if it be our Duty to *stand fast* in the Things delivered by the *Apostles*, and to *hold* to their *Epistles*, then it is our Duty to reject Things that are evidently *contrary* to their Epistles, and to Doctrines and Precepts set down in their *Writings*.

In like Manner, the *other Texts* which they quote upon this Occasion, do *fix us down* to the Things delivered by the *Apostles*, against all the Demands of them that make their *ecclesiastical Traditions*

Traditions necessary to our being Members of the Church of Christ. I need only to read them to you as they stand in the *Scriptures*, with the Alterations made by the *Romanists* Application of them, and as wise Men leave you to judge which ought to be regarded. St. *Paul* says to the *Corinthians*, “ I praise you Brethren that you remember me in all things, and keep the Ordinances (or Traditions) as I delivered them to you”, 1 *Cor.* xi. 2. According to the *Romanists*, instead of remembring or reverencing the Apostle, the Reverence must be paid to the *Authority* of the *Church*; and instead of keeping the Traditions as the *Apostle himself* delivered them, (who says “ what he received of the Lord, that also he delivered unto them”) they must be kept as the *Romish Church* represents them, with all that she hath added to them.

Again, St. *Paul* says, “ We Command you Brethren in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every Brother that walketh disorderly, (and by a Parity of Reason from every Church that walketh disorderly) and not after the Tradition which he received of us”. This us the *Romanists* apply to their Church, pretending to apostolical Traditions, not received from the *Apostles*, but from *Councils* and *Popes* several hundred Years after the *Canon* of Scripture was settled. And therefore if that Church walk not after the Tradition of the *Apostles*, that Text is an exprefs Command to *withdraw from them*, 2 *Thef.* iii. 6. The *Apostle* says, “ Hold fast the form of sound Words which thou hast heard of ME, in Faith and Love which is in Christ Jesus”, 2. *Tim.* i. 13. The *Romanists* would have this to be understood of all the *traditional Articles* of Faith in their Church, which are to be held without *Love* or *Mercy* to those that differ from them. *Timothy* is directed to “ commit the Things he had heard of the Apostle, to faithful
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“ful Men, who should be able to teach others
“also”, 2 *Tim.* ii. 2. These things the *Romanists*
pretend are committed to them *only*. If it were so,
the greater is their Iniquity, who have been abundantly
prov’d the most *unfaithful Men* in the World,
in their with-holding what is truly apostolical;
and at the same Time delivering Things for apostolical,
which are not so, but are most directly *opposite*
to the Scriptures.

We do not say this, without being able to produce many Instances of the Truth of what we assert. This hath been fully proved in the Discourses foregoing; and the Subject has been written upon very largely by many learned Men. I shall only put you in mind of a few passages under these four Heads.

1. Of Traditions which *they reject*, though plainly apostolical.

2. Of some Traditions which they say are apostolical, though they are *not to be met with* in any Writings of the Apostles, nor for several Ages succeeding.

3. Of some Traditions that are *directly contrary* to the Scriptures, and to the declared Sense of the whole Christian Church for many Ages.

4. Of some Traditions which have their Institution *wholly from the Church*, and are therefore called *ecclesiastical*; in which they contradict *themselves*, as well as the *Scriptures*.

1. For a Specimen of Traditions which they reject though *plainly and undeniably apostolical*, I need only to refer you to the main Subjects of this and the three foregoing Discourses. In which we have proved, “That JESUS CHRIST is the only
“Head of the Church, according to the Scriptures”. And “That he and his Apostles expressly require all Men to search the Scriptures”. And “That every Man is required to *judge for himself* in Things *necessary* to Salvation, as in the
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“ fight of God”. And “ That the Scriptures
 “ are *sufficiently plain*, and easy to be understood so
 “ far as is necessary to Salvation, by every honest
 “ diligent mind”. And “ That they are able to
 “ make the Man of God perfect through Faith in
 “ Christ”.*

In Opposition to these undoubted *apostolical Traditions*, you have heard of the Arts and Pretensions by which the *Romanists* reject them. But I may add, when they would thus set aside the written Word of God itself, with the Head of the Corner; who can wonder at their setting aside other things that are expressly delivered to us in these Scriptures? They make one of the *Commandments* of none Effect, by their Image Worship. They make the express Words of Christ in the Sacrament, (*drink ye all of it*) of none Effect, by refusing the Cup. They make Faith in God, or *divine Faith* of none Effect, by setting up a *human implicit* Faith in the stead of it. And they make the Doctrine of *Repentance* of none Effect, by their Confessions and Penances and Absolutions, instead of real Amendment; as you will hear in subsequent Discourses.

2. For a Specimen of Traditions which they say are *apostolical*, though they are neither to be met with in *Scripture*, nor in any Writings in the *first Ages* of Christianity, take these Instances following.

They have added to the canonical Books of Scripture, those of the *Apocrypha*, which are so called because written after *Prophecy* and *divine Inspiration* ceased. As these Books were not received amongst those *Oracles of God* which were committed to the *Jewish Church*, *Rom. iii. 2.* so neither were they admitted by the *Christian Church*. For the Council†
 of

* There are several Quotations from ancient Writers that deserve to be consulted, with reference to these Things, at the end of Archbishop Tillotson's Rule of Faith.

† Can. 60. Vid. Hieron. in Prol. Proverb.

of *Laodicea* in the *fourth Century* set down a Catalogue of the canonical Books of Scripture, in a different Manner from what is done by the *Romanists*. The Council of *Trent* expressly mentions *Tobit*, *Judith*, *Wisdom*, *Ecclesiasticus*, *Baruch*, the two Books of *Maccabees*, and a new Part of *Esther* and *Daniel*; and declares concerning these *whole Books*, with all *their Parts*, that whosoever rejects them as not canonical, is accursed. †

They deliver it also as an Apostolical Tradition, that the *Roman Church* is the *Mother and Mistress of all other Churches*; and that *without believing the Things she declares there is no Salvation*. ‡ It is observed that there are above 100 *Anathema's* in the Council of *Trent*, upon such as do not believe Points of Doctrine there laid down, though we cannot find any of them in Scripture. The offering of the *Sacrifice of the Mass for Souls in Purgatory*, is a Tradition they profess to have from Christ and his Apostles §. So also are their *mystical Benedictions*, their *Incensings*, *Garments*, *Chrism*, *Wax-lights*, and many other Things ** which have no manner of Foundation in any Apostolical Writings. And are these the *faithful Men*, Christians, to whom an implicit Faith must be yielded? How much better is it to follow that Rule of the *Apostle*, “Prove all things, hold fast that which is Good”, 1 *Thes.* v. 21. Thus the *Fathers* of the 4th and 5th Centuries, even those for whom the *Papists* profess a special Veneration, urge Christians to ‘attend to the Scriptures, looking upon all that is disagreeable there- to as adulterate’. There are many Passages in St. *Chrysostom* and St. *Austin* often referr’d to on this Head. St. *Basil*, whose Authority is much used by the *Papists* to enforce oral Traditions, yet hath one remarkable Passage that shews how he would

Q 2

have

† Concil. Trid. Sess. 4. Decr. de Script.

‡ Bulla Pii IV.

§ Concil. Trid. Sess. 22. c. 2.

** Ibid c. 5.

have them judg'd of. ' It's necessary for those that
 ' are young in Religion to learn the Scriptures,
 ' that the Mind may be well confirmed in Piety, and
 ' that they may not be accustomed to human Tra-
 ' ditions'. And St. *Syrl of Jerusalem* (whose
catechetical Discourses were published about sixteen
 Years after the Council of *Trent*) says, ' It beho-
 ' veth us not to deliver the very least thing of the
 ' Holy Myſteries of Faith, without the Holy
 ' Scripture.--- That is the Security of our Faith,
 ' not which is from our own Inventions, but from
 ' demonſtration of the Holy Scripture'*. We
 ſhall yet ſee farther need for this Advice,

3. By giving you a Specimen of ſome *Traditions*
 that are expreſſy *contrary to Scripture*. Beſides
 what was ſaid under the firſt Head of Apoſtolical
 Traditions that are *ſet aſide*, though the Scriptures
plainly enjoin them; there are other Traditions
 which the Church of *Rome* makes neceſſary,
 though they are Things *expreſſy prohibited* in the
 Word of GOD. Of this kind, is the worſhipping
 of God by *Images*, in direct Contradiction to the
ſecond Commandment, and to the guard ſet upon it
 by a particular Explication at the Time when it was
 given. ' Ye ſhall not make *with me* Gods of Silver,
 ' &c." *Exod. xx. 23.* So alſo the Worſhip of *Angels*,
 and *Saints*, notwithstanding an Angel's ſaying
 upon ſuch an Occaſion " See thou do it not"; and
 " an Apoſtle's Diſlike of the Proſtration of *Cornelius*,
 " Stand up, I my ſelf alſo am a Man": And not-
 " withſtanding ſuch *voluntary Humility* being con-
 " demned in the *worſhipping of Angels*, which is no
 better than an *intruding into things unſeen*, and a be-
 ing *vainly puffed up* by a *fleſhly Mind*, *Coloſ. ii. 18.*
 The blaſphemous Adorations of the *Virgin Mary*,
 are a moſt ſhameful Contradiction to the Scripture
 rule of Worſhip; and conſidering the ſtreſs laid upon
 this in the *Roman Church*, it deſerves to be particu-
 larly

* Catecheſ. 5.

larly exposed. But I should trespass upon your Patience, and too much go into the Province of another, if I should enlarge on this Head. I will only beg leave to instance in one Thing more, by which the *whole Practice* of Godliness and Virtue is destroyed, and that is their Tradition about *Works of Supererogation*, upon which the Practice of their granting Indulgences is founded *. This is against the *express Words* of our Saviour, “ When ye shall
“ have done all these Things which are command-
“ ed you, say we are unprofitable Servants”, *Luke* xvii. 10. And against the Verses before our Text, as was shewn at the Beginning of this Discourse; and against the whole Tenor of the Gospel, and the Apostolical Writings. And yet this *Overplus* of good Works the Church of *Rome* pretends to have as a *Fund or Treasure* in her Custody, according to the 21st Session of the *Council of Trent* †; and this Treasure is to be disposed of as their Church sees fit ‡. The *plenary Indulgences* granted upon this Pretence, are the more to be abhorred by all them that believe the *Apostle*, that “ no Man shall see the
“ Lord without Holiness,” because *Cardinal Hosius*, the *Pope’s Legate* at the *Council of Trent*, hath taught, ‘ *That the Doctrine of their Church is the ex-*
‘ *press Word of God, and whatever is taught a-*
‘ *gainst the Sense and consent of the Church is the*
‘ *express Word of the Devil* §.’ These are Things so shocking, that no Man can forbear concluding, this *Traditionary Spirit* is that very Spirit which *works in the Children of Disobedience*.

But I must hasten, in the *last Place*, to say something briefly on those Traditions which have their Institution *wholly from the Church*, and are therefore called *Ecclesiastical*; in which they are as notorious for contradicting *themselves*, as for their Contradictions to *Scripture*.

Q 3

Some

* Bellarm. de Indulg. l. 1. c. 2.

† Can. 9.

‡ Bellarm. de Indul. l. 1. c. 3.

§ De expresso Dei verbo, p. 642, 643.

Some of their Writers acknowledge, that the Doctrines of *Transubstantiation*, and of the *seven Sacraments*, and of *Prugatory*, and the like, are *not* in Scripture; but others earnestly contend that they are to be proved from thence. And in their *Explanations* of these Points, as well as in their ways of *arguing* about them, they have uttered the most inconsistent things: Not only contradicting one another, but the same Writer contradicting himself, and upon the whole destroying the Credit of the very things they would enforce by the most shameful Affronts offered to common Sense and Reason. The Discourses you are to expect on these Heads, as well as upon *Auricular Confession*, *Penances*, &c. will doubtless give you Proofs enow of their *Absurdity* and *Inconsistence* with themselves.

I shall only instance in what relates to the *two* main Parts of the foregoing Discourse; that is, in what they deliver concerning the *Use of the Scripture*, and concerning *oral Tradition* being a *rule of Faith*. When we compare their *former* Accounts of these Things, with the *present* Establishment and Decrees of their Church, we shall find them as directly opposite as Words can describe. It has been proved (in former Writings against *Popery*) from numerous and undoubted Testimonies, that *Catholick Tradition* for *fifteen* hundred Years allow'd the Perfection and Plainness of *Scripture* as a *Rule of Faith and Manners*. It shall suffice at present to produce *three* Witnesses for the Proof of this, as low as the *Century* preceding that of the Council of *Trent*.

The first is that of *Thomas Walden*, who was *Confessor* * to King *Henry V.* He was one of the strenuous Opposers of *Wickliff*, whose Books were condemned at *Oxford*; at which time the *Lollards* (as all Protestants were then called by way of *Reproach*) were used with great Severity at the Insti-

gation

* *Thylenius* de *Scip. Illustr.* &c.

gation of the *Popish* Bishops; so our *English* History informs us. Yet in this Juncture, and with all the Power that *Popery* then had, *Walden* utterly disclaims any such Thought, as that of an *Equality* between *Scripture* and *Tradition*; and he particularly insists on the Distance that ought to be kept betwixt the *canonical* Writings, and *ecclesiastical* Authority*.

The *second* Witness for the *Scripture*, about the same time, is that of *John Gerson*, who was declared by *Cardinal Zabarella*, in the Council of *Constance*, to be the greatest Divine of his Time. He says, 'That if a Man be well skill'd in *Scripture*, his Doctrine deserves more to be regarded than the Pope's Declaration.' Yea, he adds, farther, 'That if in a general Council he find the Majority incline to that Part which is contrary to *Scripture*, he is bound to oppose it: And he instanceth in *Hilary*; shewing that since the Canon of *Scripture* received by the Church, no Authority of the Church is to be equall'd to it †.

The third witness is *Cajetan*, who was counted the Oracle of his Day, as *Dr. Stillingfleet* observes. He says, that the *Scripture* gives such a perfection to a Man of God, (and he evidently asserts the Plainness as well as Perfection of *Scripture*, because he explains the Man of God to be any one that devoutly serves him) that he is thereby accomplish'd for every good Work ‡

Q 4

Many

* Non quod in auctoritate æquantur, absit; sed sequantur, non quidem in subsidium auctoritatis canonicæ, sed in admonitionem posterorum. Lib. 2. Art. 2. c. 22.

† *Joh. Gerson. Exam. Doctr. p. 540.* To which the passage following may be added, from the *second Part* of his *Trial of Doctrines*. Quoniam scriptura nobis tradita est, tanquam regula sufficiens & infallibilis, pro regimine totius ecclesiastici corporis & membrorum, usque in finem seculi: Est igitur talis ars, talis regula vel exemplar, cui se non conformans alia doctrina, vel abjicienda est ut hæreticalis, aut suspecta aut impertinens ad religionem prorsus est habenda.

‡ Ecce quo tendit utilitas divinæ scripturæ ad perfectionem hominis Dei, (hoc est qui totum seipsum Deo dat] perfectionem, inquam, talem ut sit perfectus ad omne bonum exercendum. In. Ep. 2. ad. Tim. iii. 16.

Many other Testimonies of this Kind might be produced, in the close of the 15th Century. But from that time the *Romanists* determin'd to go another way to Work. Infomuch that they were carried to *oppose* and *condemn* all those former *Catholick* Traditions. They resolved with Cardinal *Turrecremata* to found *Catholick* Verities for the future on *unwritten* Tradition, as well as on *Scripture*. And Cardinal *Cusa* set up the Notion of a *running Sense* of *Scripture*, which might be suited to the various *Occasions* of the Church, and adapted to every *new Rite**. Agreeably hereto, Pope *Leo X.* condemns *Martin Luther* for denying the Power of the Church to make *new Articles* of Faith. In that Pope's *Bull* against *Luther*, known by the Title of *Exurge Domine*, the 22d Proposition condemned is set down thus: "That it is not in the Power of the Church" or *Pope* to appoint *new Articles* of Faith.

The Errors and Corruptions then complained of, not being possible to be defended by *Scripture*, and yet not being thought requisite to give them up, several Attempts were made to set *Tradition* on an *equal Foot* with the *Scripture*. They must no longer stand in the Place where *Gerson*, and others of their own *Writers* before had placed them, that is, in the *second Degree* of the Truths of Faith, which was the general Opinion of the *Council of Constance*; but all manner of Attempts were used, to raise the Credit of Tradition to the utmost height, as the only *secure way*. So that they got it inserted as one of the *Canons* of a *provincial Council*, in 1527, *That to receive nothing but what is deduced from Scripture, is a pernicious Error* †.

Upon

* *Scripturas esse ad tempus adaptatas & variè intellectas, ita ut uno tempore secundum currentem universalem ritum exponerentur, mutato ritu iterum sententia mutaretur. Cus. ad bohem. Ep. ii.*

† *Council of Sens, in France, Can. 53.*

Upon Authority of no longer standing than this, the *Council of Trent* was brought to establish it as a necessary Part of the Constitution of the *Roman Church*, "That their Traditions should be received as of *equal Authority* with the Scriptures themselves." Of which we spoke in the former Part of this Discourse.

Thus we see, that *Tradition* contradicts *Tradition*, and the Papists now become as inconsistent with *themselves* as with the Scriptures.

A like contradictory to all their own former Traditions, was their taking the apocryphal Books into the *Canon* of Scripture, as many of their most learned Men shew'd in the *Council of Trent* itself. But I should quite tire you, if I should shew the Opposition there was in the Debates on this Head. I will only add this short Account of it from *F. Paul's History*, who informs us, *That they could by no Means agree about making the Catalogue of the divine Books; and they had so much trouble about SOME PARTS of the Apocrypha, (not being able to produce any Tradition for them) that one while it was proposed to distinguish the Catalogue into Books of different Classes, or else not descend to particular Books at all; and another while to make only one Catalogue, and set down all the Books as of equal Authority* *. Here again, Tradition (particularly as to *Baruch*) quite failed; and Numbers carried it for the apocryphal Books, as they now stand in the *Decree* to which we referr'd before.

Upon this Principle, every new *Council* begins a new Set of Traditions; and by thus contradicting and leaving the *Scripture*, Men of Learning are led into endless Mazes, and the most dishonest Arts; and the poor *Laity* in common Life are subject to perpetual *Tyranny*, and to have new *Yokes of Bondage* put upon them in every Age.

May

* This is a short account of what is more at large in *F. Paul's History*, translated by *Brent*, in 1726, p. 144, 145.

May we not therefore say of those that *return* to *Popery*, as the Apostle says of the foolish *Galatians*, “ Who hath bewitched them, that they should not “ obey the Truth ?-----To suffer so many, or so “ great Things in vain, (as we have suffer’d formerly in these Nations) if it be yet in vain.” But we hope *better Things* of you, and Things that accompany Salvation in the compleatest Sense, though we thus speak.

Upon what has been said, I hope the following Advices will be acceptable, which with a very brief Mention of them, I shall leave with you.

When you are speaking with Tendernefs and Charity of the Multitude of *poor Souls* that are under the *Roman Yoke*, and hoping that many of them may be saved, let that very *Compassion* excite your Detestation of *Popery*, that hath so sadly *abused* and *enslaved* humble and honest Minds. And do not flatter any of that Church, by allowing that Salvation is to be had any further, than as they *believe* and *obey* the Scriptures.

Take Care, if ever you fall into Conversation with them upon the Head of *Traditions*, that you watch against their Subtilty, in quoting Places of Scripture which speak of Traditions before the *Canon* of Scripture was compleated; and in quoting the *Fathers* for the Tradition of Scripture itself, or of Things declared and proved from thence; and then applying these Things to enforce their *ecclesiastical* Demands and Decisions.

Be sure to *read* the Scriptures till you are ready in them; and engage those about you, and all that are under your Care to do so; or else the *free Use* of your Bible, in a Language that you understand, is a Privilege and Blessing that will rise up in Judgment against you.

Watch against *Infidelity* and *Immorality*, and every Thing that would disgrace the Scripture, considering

dering how great Advantage is given to the *Practices* of the *Romanists*, by departing from the Scripture, either as a Rule of Faith or Manners.

And finally, let the Scripture be made the great Bond of *Peace* and *Union* amongst all Protestants. In Things *expressly declared*, and necessary to Salvation, let us firmly and unanimously abide; in Things *deduced* from Scripture by fair and just Consequences, let us leave every one to *judge* as accountable to God, and to his own Conscience: And in Things *disputable*, and difficult to be understood, let us proceed with *Care*, comparing spiritual Things with spiritual; and maintain *Charity*, allowing for different Sentiments and Opinions.

Here I had closed, had I not thought it would be of special Service in such an Audience as this, to recite one Passage from a well-known Writer *intire*, which is often quoted by Piece-meal: I mean that *immortal Paragraph* which we have in *Chillingworth's* Proof that *Protestants are no Hereticks*. Which whoever hears, or reads, as the Language of one *converted from Popery* by the *Study of the Scriptures*, cannot help being greatly moved with it, let him hear or read it ever so often. Addressing to a Writer of the *Roman Church*, he thus summarily pleads the *Protestant Cause*.

‘ Know then, Sir, that when I say the Religion
 ‘ of *Protestants* is in Prudence to be preferr’d before
 ‘ yours; as on the one Side I do not understand by
 ‘ your Religion the Doctrine of *Bellarmino* or *Baronius*, or any other private Men amongst you,
 ‘ nor the Doctrine of the *Sorbonne* or of the *Jesuits*,
 ‘ or of the *Dominicans*, or of any other particular
 ‘ Company amongst you; but that wherein ye all
 ‘ agree, or profess to agree, the *Doctrine of the Council of Trent*: So accordingly on the other Side, by
 ‘ the Religion of *Protestants*, I do not understand
 ‘ the Doctrine of *Luther*, or *Calvin*, or *Melancthon*,
 ‘ nor

‘ nor the Confession of *Augusta*, or *Geneva*, nor the
 ‘ *Catechism* of *Heidelberg*, nor the Articles of the
 ‘ *Church* of *England*, no, nor the Harmony of Pro-
 ‘ testant Confessions; but that wherein they all
 ‘ agree, and which they all subscribe with a greater
 ‘ Harmony, as a perfect *Rule* of their Faith and
 ‘ Actions, that is the BIBLE.

‘ The BIBLE, I say the BIBLE only, is the Reli-
 ‘ gion of Protestants, whatsoever else they believe
 ‘ besides it: And the plain, irrefragable, and indubitable
 ‘ *Consequences* of it, well may they hold as
 ‘ Matter of Opinion; but as Matter of Faith and
 ‘ Religion, neither can they with coherence to
 ‘ their own Grounds believe it themselves, nor re-
 ‘ quire the Belief of it of others, without most
 ‘ high and schismatical Presumption. I for my
 ‘ Part, after a long, and (as I verily believe and
 ‘ hope) impartial Search of the *true Way* to *eternal*
 ‘ *Happiness*, do profess plainly that I cannot find any
 ‘ Rest for the Sole of my Foot, but upon this Rock
 ‘ only.

‘ I see plainly, and with mine own Eyes, that
 ‘ there are Popes against Popes, Councils against
 ‘ Councils, some Fathers against others, the same
 ‘ Fathers against themselves, a Consent of Fathers
 ‘ of one Age against a Consent of Fathers of another
 ‘ Age, the Church of one Age against the Church
 ‘ of another Age: Traditive Interpretations of
 ‘ Scripture are pretended, but there are few or none
 ‘ to be found: No Tradition but only of Scripture,
 ‘ can derive itself from the Fountain, but may be
 ‘ plainly proved to be brought in, in such an Age af-
 ‘ ter Christ, or that such an Age it was not in. In a
 ‘ Word, there is no sufficient *Certainty* but of Scrip-
 ‘ ture only, for any considering Man to build upon.
 ‘ This therefore, and this only I have Reason to be-
 ‘ lieve: This I will profess, according to this I will
 ‘ live, and for this, if there be Occasion, I will
 ‘ not only willingly, but even gladly, lose my Life,
 ‘ though

‘ though I should be sorry that *Christians* should
‘ take it from me.

‘ Propose me any Thing out of this Book, and
‘ require whether I believe or no, and seem it never
‘ so incomprehensible to human Reason, I will sub-
‘ scribe it with Hand and Heart, as knowing no De-
‘ monstration can be stronger than this, “ God
“ hath said so, therefore it is true.” In other
‘ Things, I will take no Man’s Liberty of judging
‘ from him; neither shall any Man take mine from
‘ me. I will think no Man the worse *Man*, nor the
‘ worse *Christian*, I will love no Man the less for
‘ differing in Opinion from me. And what Mea-
‘ sure I mete to others, I expect from them again.
‘ I am fully assured that God *does* not, and therefore
‘ Men *ought* not to require any more of any Man
‘ than this, “ To believe the Scripture to be God’s
“ Word, to endeavour to find the true Sense of it,
“ and to live according to it.”

May this be our Happiness through Jesus Christ
our Lord, to whom be glory now and ever. *Amen.*

*A Discourse concerning TRANSUB-
STANTIATION: In which the Words
of the Institution of the Lord's Sup-
per are particularly considered.*

PREACH'D AT

Salters-Hall, Feb. 13, 1734-5.

By *W. HARRIS, D.D.*

LUKE xxii. 19, 20.

*This is my Body which is given for you:
[which is broken for you, 1 Cor. xi. 24]
This do in remembrance of me. — This
cup is the new testament in my blood,
which is shed for you.*

THESE words, according to the Doctrine
of the *Reformed Churches*, are to be un-
derstood in a *figurative* and spiritual sense,
and to mean no more than, This bread sig-
nifies my body, which will shortly be broken, and
this cup my blood, which will shortly be shed, for
the redemption of the world; and the eating this
bread, and drinking this cup, are to be a standing
memorial

memorial of my death, in the Christian church, to the end of the world.

The *church of Rome*, on the contrary, pretends, that these words must be understood in a strict, and *literal* sense, and to signify, that the *bread* and *wine* in the Lord's Supper, when these words are pronounced by a Priest, with an Intention of consecrating them, are immediately changed into the real natural *body* and *blood* of Christ, and become his real *flesh* and *blood*; and that they cease to be any longer bread and wine, and have nothing but the appearance, and accidents of them left. 'Tis thus express'd by the *council of Trent*, which was their last *general council*, and is the standard of *modern Popery*, viz. That *by the consecrating of bread and wine Jesus Christ, very God, and very man, is truly, really, and substantially contained under the species of those sensible signs; that there is a conversion of the whole substance of bread, in this holy sacrament, into the whole substance of the body of Christ; and of the whole substance of wine into his blood; which conversion is fitly and properly called Transubstantiation**. And the council denounces an *anathema* against all who believe and teach otherwise.

This is further explained in the *Trent Catechism*; That 'tis the *true body of Christ which was born of the virgin, and is now in heaven, together with his soul and divinity*: That 'tis *entire in every part of the bread, and every drop of the wine*, and that *no part of the substance of bread and wine remains*: That the *accidents of bread and wine, which do remain, are in no subject, but exist by themselves in a wonderful manner, and which is not too curiously to be enquired into*†.

This is the point I am to debate at this time; and because these words are made the principal support of this doctrine, I shall confine myself to this single view of the case. What I have to offer
against

* Concil. Trid. Sess. 13. c. 6.

† Catech. ad Parochos, P. 2. De Euchar.

against this interpretation of the words, I shall reduce to the following Observations.

§. 1. There is no *necessity* of understanding these words in this sense. If indeed they could be understood in no other sense, and were not capable of any other construction, it were another case; but they will easily and fairly admit of another sense. I readily acknowledge the known rule of interpretation, That the literal sense of words is not to be forsaken, and a figurative one followed, without necessity: The natural and proper sense is always to be preferred, where the case will admit and allow it; but then it is as certain a rule, That the literal sense *ought* to be forsaken, and a figurative sense received, where the *nature* of the subject, the relation to the *context*, or any other circumstance of things, evidently require and make it necessary.

Now what I observe here, as the first and lowest exception to this interpretation is, That there is no manner of *necessity* to understand these words in a strict and literal sense, but they *may* fitly be understood in a figurative one; whether they *ought* to be, or not, must be considered afterward. For the proof of this observation, I appeal to the frequent figurative expressions of a like kind in our Lord's discourses with his disciples, when he is speaking of himself, and upon all occasions, agreeably to the language of the Eastern nations, and of the *Jewish* church. And the best way to understand any author's expressions, is to attend to his phraseology, and use of words, in like cases in other instances. Thus, for example, when our Lord says of himself, *I am the door*, and the *true vine*, and the *good shepherd*; when he calls his body *this temple*, and the church *his body*; when he says, the *field is the world*; the *tares are the children of the wicked one*; the *harvest is the end of the world*; the *reapers are the angels*; and when the Apostle says, *Christ*
is

is our passover; and this rock is Christ; the meaning is not; that these are the very things themselves; but only that they *signify* these several things; that there is some resemblance and likeness between them; and they are proper images and representations of them. These are confessed on all hands to be figurative expressions, of an obvious and easy signification, which were never mistaken by any one, or pretended to be used in a literal sense. Nothing is more usual in all language, and among all nations; than to put the *sign* for the *thing* signified by it. So is *wax* when it becomes a *seal*, and *gold* and *silver* when coined into *money*.

This expression therefore; *This is my body*, may be understood in a figurative sense, and to mean, This bread *signifies* my body, and is designed to be a *memorial* of it; and no man can pretend to say, That they *cannot* be so understood; and are not *capable* of such a signification, or that there is any *necessity* of understanding them otherwise. And why then should we draw a needless difficulty upon the Christian doctrine, and perplex the minds of men, without any manner of necessity; and when the words can so easily be understood in another sense?

§. 2. 'Tis not a convenient, or *probable* sense; *i. e.* agreeable to the *subject* spoken of; and the *occasion* of speaking them. 'Tis another rule of interpretation, that words and phrases must be understood suitably to the *subject* to which they belong, and the *occasion* of speaking them, and according to the *genius* and customs of the people where they are spoken. So terms of art are understood agreeably to the several arts to which they relate; and the *Jews*, and all the Eastern nations were known to delight in parabolical and figurative representations; and nothing was more frequent, or better understood among them.

If we consider these words in this view, we shall find the matter stand thus: Our Lord had been just celebrating the last *passover* with his disciples, a little before his sufferings, which was a solemn festival appointed by God, in commemoration of the angel's passing over the houses of the *Israelites*, when he slew all the first-born of *Egypt* *. It consisted in eating a roasted lamb, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. --- The eating the paschal lamb was called the *Lord's passover* †. So the *Jewish* church always understood it, from the first institution of it to this day. The apostles, who were all *Jews* by birth and religion, well understood the nature of their own Passover, as they had been accustomed all along to such ways of representation in our Lord's discourses.

Now when the Passover was finished, our Lord took some of the bread which remained of the paschal supper, and broke it, and said, *This is my body*; and some of the wine, and poured it forth, and said, *This cup is the new testament in my blood: i. e.* I appoint this supper to be a perpetual memorial of my suffering and death which are now approaching; as the eating the paschal lamb was of the angel's passing over the houses of the *Israelites*. I appeal to any ingenuous and impartial mind, whether this is not the natural sense of the expressions and much the more probable and likely sense; more agreeable to the subject and occasion of them, and which makes the whole transaction uniform, and all of a piece: And whether it is not very unnatural and disagreeable, to suppose our Lord immediately after the observation of the Passover, which was so well understood by the disciples, to institute another ordinance instead of it, with so strange a meaning as was never heard of before, and entirely

* Exod. x.

† The *Jews* called the Passover the *body* of the paschal lamb. *Buxt. Vind. cont. Cap. v. 14.*

ly different from the occasion of it, and without the least hint, or intimation of so extraordinary a thing. Can one think it likely that it should never be made a question by the scrupulous disciples; nor more objected afterwards to the Christians by the Pagan writers, * who were full of questions and cavils; upon other matters, where there was less occasion given.

Besides, the nature of a *sacrament* requires this, which is allowed to be, a visible *sensible* sign of a *spiritual* blessing and benefit. There is always something sensible, to represent something spiritual; so *water* in baptism, signifies the *washing away our sins*; † and the *answer of a good conscience toward God*: ‡ And *bread* and *wine* in the Lord's Supper signify the *body* and *blood* of Christ, which was broken and shed for us, and the *blessings* we obtain by his death. Whereas upon this supposition, there is no visible sign of the thing, but the very thing itself; and because nothing can be a sign of itself, this destroys the definition and alters the nature of a sacrament.

Upon these accounts we conclude it more agreeable to the subject, the occasion, and all the circumstances of it, to understand these words in a figurative, and not in a literal sense.

§. 3. 'Tis not a *consistent* sense, or suitable to the other expressions which are here used concerning it. If this expression was designed to be understood in a literal sense, then according to all the rules of reasonable construction, so must the other expressions too which belong to the same matter, and were spoken at the same time; especially if any of them are exactly parallel to this. It

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would

* When any thing of this kind is mentioned in the Christian *Apolo-*
gists, 'tis constantly denied of themselves, and strongly retorted up-
on their adversaries.

† Acts xxii. 6.

‡ 1 Peter iii. 21.

would be very unreasonable to pick out a single sentence in the same discourse, and understand it in a strict and *literal* sense, when the other expressions round about it, are plainly *figurative* and allusive, or require it to be so understood; and so we find it always was in our Lord's parabolical discourses where the figure is continued quite thro', and appears in every part.

If we consider the matter in this light, we shall find that neither these words, nor the other expressions here used, can be understood in any consistency with themselves, without a figure. If the demonstrative *this* * refers to the *bread* spoken of in the foregoing verse, and there is no other antecedent to which it can refer; then *this bread* which he took, and blessed, and brake, *is my body*, in the rigour of the letter, will signify, that it was both *bread*, and *his body*, at the same time; or that the bread *was* the substance of Christ's body, and not *changed* into it; which is a flagrant inconsistency, for they are not only distinct, but quite different things: And when these words, *this is MY body*, are pronounced by a priest, it will necessarily signify the change to be made, into the body of the *priest*, and not of *Christ*; unless you allow a figure, and suppose him to speak in the person of Christ. Our Lord says, *This is my body which is BROKEN for you*, when it was not yet broken; but only in the figure and representation of it.

Again, he says, --- *this do in remembrance of me*, εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν, as a memorial of me. *q. d.* As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, think of

* Tho' τὸ το does not agree with ἄρτος, yet it will with the whole sentence, *this bread, taken, broken and blessed*; of which construction there are many instances in the LXX, and in the new testament. Eph. ii. 8. *Ye are saved by grace, thro' faith, and that not of your selves*, καὶ τὸ το *it is the gift of God*. τὸ το cannot agree either with χάρις or πίστις, but it refers to the whole sentence, *q. d.* This appointment and constitution, that we are *saved by grace thro' faith*, is a free favour and vouchsafement of God.

of me who died for you: Don't forget me when I am gone to the Father, and you shall see me no more: Keep up the remembrance of your absent friend and benefactor by this token of love and respect; as the paschal lamb was a perpetual memorial of the *Israelites* deliverance and preservation in *Egypt*. This is certainly the obvious meaning of the words. But if the natural body and blood of Christ be really present in the sacrament, how is it then a memorial of him? Do we properly remember one who is present with us? Does not a memorial set up, or observed in remembrance of any person or action, suppose that person to be absent, and that fact to be passed? With what propriety can it be said, Take my body in remembrance of my body: Take my self for a token to remember me by? * May we not with as good sense talk of seeing an absent friend, as remembering one who is present? No, he is not now bodily present with us, but at a distance from us: So our Lord told the disciples, Me you have not always; † and the Apostle says, Tho' we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no more. ‡ This is to supply the place of his presence, and to be in some sort instead of it. So that this supposition would alter the great design of the sacrament, as the former did the nature of it; for it would make it conversing with Christ present, and not a memorial of him absent. 'Tis in this sense the apostle says, Ye shew forth the Lord's death till he come, κατὰ χυρῖλλον, & declare it to others, and make an open profession of it, as the *Israelites* were required to shew to their children what the Lord had done for them. ||

Besides, our Lord says as expressly, This cup is the new testament in my blood, as, This is my body; and

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* Nemo recordatur nisi quod in præsentia non est positum. Aug. in Psal. xxxvii.

† Matth. xxvi. 11.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 16.

§ 1 Cor. xi. 26.

|| Exod. xiii. 8.

according to all the reason and rules of interpretation, we must be obliged to understand this expression in a literal sense too. And then if there is any real and substantial change, it must be of the *cup*, and not of the *wine*, for he says, *This cup is the new testament*. Well, *This cup*, i.e. the wine in this cup, which is itself a figure, *is the new testament*, that is, not only procures, and confirms it to us, or signifies and represents it, but literally, *this cup is the new testament*; which is language so strange and uncouth, that I know not whether any Papist will pretend to own it: But the reason however is common to both, and if one part of the sentence must be understood in a strict literal sense, the other, which is exactly parallel, must be understood so too; and they must necessarily either both be true, or both be false, unless a reason of the Distinction can be assigned, and the difference between them pointed out.

'Tis further considerable to this purpose, that our Lord himself expressly calls it, after the institution and celebration of it, *the fruit of the vine*.* And the apostle speaks of it in such a manner, as plainly shews he had no such apprehension of the matter; for he calls it *bread* three several times, in the verses immediately following the institution, as if he would purposely guard against such a conceit; *As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup*; and *Whosoever eateth this bread, and drinketh this cup*; and, *So let him eat this bread and drink this cup*; τὸν ἄρτον τῆτον, and τὸ ἄρτι, this bread remaining bread, not this body, where there is no bread remaining. And the apostle sometimes represents the whole action, by the *breaking of bread*.†

This makes all the expressions agreeable to the subject, and consistent with themselves, and renders it together a regular and beautiful representation of the matter. I add further,

§. 4.

* Matt. xxvi. 29.

† Acts ii. 42. xx. 7.

§. 4. That this sense of the words is not reasonable, or agreeable to the principles of *human* nature. As we consist of a *conscious* principle, and a *material* body, so the only powers by which we attain all our knowledge, are our *reason*, and our *senses*; and we have no other by which to raise *ideas*, or pass a *judgment* on any thing. We justly conclude, that God will deal with us, in all his transactions, suitably to the nature he has given us, and not contrary to it. Whatsoever therefore is contrary to the reason of our minds, and the senses of our body, in the due exercise of them, and upon their proper objects, is justly accounted *absurd*.

Now this is the case here; for all the reason of our minds informs us, from all the circumstances of things, that *this is my body*, can only mean, This bread broken *signifies* my body which is shortly to be broken for you; and not, this is my *real* natural body. 'Tis plain the disciples could not so understand him, at the time of the institution; for his natural body was then before them, and was not yet broken. They saw him whole and entire before their eyes. He took the bread of the passover in his hands, when he spake these words, and when he had blest it, eat it; and they could never suppose that he took his whole body into his own hands, and that he *eat himself*, which would shock all the reason in the world. We can judge of no sensible object whatsoever, but by the essential properties which describe its nature, and distinguish it from others; nor do we pretend to know the abstract nature and essence of any thing. Now to suppose any object to be one thing, while it has only the properties of another, and none of the properties of that thing, is manifestly contrary to reason. Indeed no man can pretend that his own reason would ever have led him to such a sense of the words, or that it was reasonable so to understand them. This is so

evident, that several of the greatest men of the church of *Rome*, have ingenuously given up this ground, and refer it wholly to the authority of the church.

It will be said; but this is a matter of *faith*, and not of *reason*: 'Tis a mystery to be believed, and is above reason.----But there is always a reason of faith, and a motive of credibility, of any proposition or any fact. We must first understand what we are to believe, and in what sense we are to believe it. 'Tis the office of reason duly disposed and instructed, to help us to understand the objects of our faith, so far as we are concerned to believe them, whatsoever further there may be in the things themselves; or else we must lie open to all the imposture and delusion in the world, and be obliged to believe whatsoever any man has the confidence and presumption to pass upon us as the will of God: And an unreasonable faith, or believing without a reason, is a great absurdity, and could have no virtue, or acceptableness in it. We are enquiring what we are to believe, and in what sense this expression is to be understood; and that is the Province of reason, and neither against it, or above it.

Besides, 'Tis contrary to our *sense*, which is the proper judge in matters of sense. We plainly discern that 'tis bread and wine after these Words are pronounced, as much as before; and not the body and blood of a man: It has not only the same *figure* and appearance, but the same *nature* and properties it had before, the same form, the same smell and taste. 'Tis separated indeed to a sacred Use, by virtue of Christ's appointment, which is the proper *consecration* of it; *i.e.* 'Tis a memorial of his death, and of the new covenant; and this, I hope, is no *conjurat*ion, as a late Writer * is pleased to express it; but 'tis nevertheless bread and wine, and equally capable

capable of answering this purpose, without any such change of them, and much more properly too.

Here is a *concurrence* of our senses, and of the senses of all mankind, at all times, and in a proper Object of sense. We *see* with our eyes that 'tis bread and wine; and if they are more easily mistaken, we *feel*, and *handle* it, we *smell*, and *taste* it. There is no difference possible to be observed, by any of our senses, with the closest inspection, and exactest scrutiny, before and after the consecration, or between that bread and any other. So that here is not a doubtful and disputable matter, for which several things may be said on either side; but there is a plain sensible *fact* on one side, and only a confident *assertion* on the other. 'Tis indeed a down-right defiance and affront to all the reason and sense of mankind, which yet are the only faculties by which we can judge of any thing.

If it be said, That our senses often *deceive* us, as in the apparent dimensions of the sun, the distance of the stars, and when a strait stick appears crooked in the water:----I answer, That is not because our senses, especially in concurrence with our reason, are not the proper judges of sensible objects; but because they are not rightly circumstanced, by reason of undue distance, or an unapt medium through which we see them. Nor do they properly deceive us when a due consideration is had of all the circumstances of the case. If we cannot judge by our senses of sensible Objects, in a due situation and circumstance, then we must be liable to perpetual deceit by our nature and make; then we cannot be sure of any thing; that we ourselves exist, or that there are such words in the Bible, but that we dwell in the midst of *enchantments*, and in a mere *ideal* world, without any real objects about us: Then I cannot be sure that 'tis not midnight darkness in the glaring light of noon-day, or that in this numerous assembly I don't stand here alone, without

a single person present with me. This would reflect an infinite dishonour upon the God of nature, the wise Creator of the world, who upon this supposition, would have made us the most awkward and untoward creatures in all the world.

Besides that this would destroy the great *proofs* of Christianity, and all the evidence of *miracles*, which are nothing else but visible facts, and *appeals* to the *senses* of men; as when our Lord *healed* the sick, and *raised* the dead. The truth of his *resurrection*, upon which so great a weight is laid, was capable of no higher a proof; and therefore our Lord appeals to the senses of the disciples, when he appeared to them after his resurrection; * *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me have: And when he had thus spoken he shewed them his hands and his feet.* He appeals to their eyes and hands, their sight and feeling. And when Thomas was more scrupulous and cautious than the rest of the disciples, he offered him, with the greatest condescension, and as the highest evidence, † *Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hand; reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing.* But how would this have been any satisfaction to their anxious and doubtful minds, if their sight and feeling could have deceived them, or had not been a sufficient proof.

The apostles made no higher pretension to convince the world of the truth of the fact, than that they were ‡ *eye-witnesses of his resurrection, and his glory*; and could say, ** *That which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life---that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you.* I conclude therefore from all this, that that must be unreasonable and absurd which is evidently contrary to the

* Luke xxiv. 39.

‡ Acts iii. 15. 2 Pet. i. 16.

† John xx. 27.

** 1 Epist. John i. 1, 2.

the sober reason and sound sense of all mankind, and would destroy the use and advantage of both, in every other case, as well as in this. But I advance further still.

§. 5. It is an *impossible* sense, and *cannot* be true; for it implies a great deal of contradiction in it. This proceeds upon this principle, That whatsoever implies an evident contradiction to the nature and reason of things, in any fact or proposition, cannot be true, and is impossible to be done. No power whatsoever can do that which cannot be done, and which is no object of power. 'Tis a direct *repugnance* to all being and all power; for that which builds up one side of a contradiction, does necessarily, at the same time, destroy the other. So that 'tis really doing nothing, and producing no effect, and there is no need of any power to do nothing, much less of divine power. When the apostle says, That *God cannot deny himself*; and that 'tis *impossible for God to lie*; the meaning is, That the divine Being, who is infinitely wise and true, as well as Almighty, cannot act in contradiction to the immutable nature of things, and the infinite perfection of his own nature. * So to make a triangle a square, or a square a circle; for that would destroy the nature of the triangle and circle, and they cannot be both at once, or either have the properties of the other.

Now the doctrine of *Transubstantiation* plainly implies a contradiction in many undeniable instances. For example; It supposes the bread to be turned into the *broken* body of Christ, when he himself was present with his disciples, and his body was *not* yet broken. For if the pronouncing these words by a Priest produces this wonderful effect, then surely the pronouncing them by Christ himself, must much more do it, for this was the leading in-

* Ἀτοπα γὰρ ἂν συντελέσει ὁ παντοκράτωρ.

stance to all the rest. And then here was his *natural* body entire and whole before their eyes, by which he took the bread, and spoke these words; and the *bread* turned into his broken body; and so he had two distinct bodies at the same time, quite different from one another, one *entire*, and the other *broken*. This implies this evident contradiction, That his body was broken, and not broken at the same time, his blood shed, and not shed. If there were any change at that time, it must have been into his *whole* body, and not into his *broken* body; but that the same body should be both whole and broken at the same time, is a direct inconsistency, and absolutely impossible.

Besides, it supposes his natural body, which is but *one*, to be at the same time *many*: 'Tis one body in heaven, and ten thousand bodies on earth, and the same body divided and separated from itself, which is a contradiction in *numbers*. Yea, 'tis one and the same body with quite different *qualities*; 'tis a *glorified* body in Heaven, and a *broken* body on earth; it exists spiritually and bodily at the same time; it had a being seventeen hundred years ago, and is made afresh every day, *i.e.* it was in being before it began to be, and was in being, and not in being at the same time.

Further, it supposes the same *individual* body to be in innumerable *places* at the same time. 'Tis in heaven and earth, and in all the parts of the earth, wherever the sacrament is administered, how remote and distant soever, at the same instant. This is a contradiction to the nature of body, which is naturally *extended* and impenetrable, and can occupy but *one* place at once, and is circumscribed by it in proportion to its figure and magnitude. When any body is removed out of *one* place into another, it necessarily ceases to be in the former place, and one place must be without it, while the other possesses it. It being but *one* thing, it cannot be in both;
for

for then it would be *two* things, and not one, which is contrary to the supposition. 'Tis a contradiction to all our notions of matter, and all our observations and experience, for the same *system* of matter to be actually in more places than one at the same time, much more to be in ten thousand places together.

If it be said, 'Tis now a *spiritual* body, and not gross *matter*; I answer, It was not a *spiritual* but a *mortal* body, when our Lord spoke these words: And if it be now a *spiritual* body, then how comes it to have flesh and blood; when *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven*? However, if it be a true and proper body, it must necessarily partake of the essential properties of body, how much soever it is spiritualized, or else it will be no body at all. Not to add, That no *finite* being whatsoever, whether *body*, or *spirit*, can be conceived to be in more places than one, at the same time, tho' spiritual beings by their natural fineness and agility, can sooner remove from one place to another, as the angel *Gabriel*, whom *Daniel* saw in a vision at the beginning of his prayer, * *Being caused to fly swiftly, touched him about the time of the evening oblation.*

Once more, it supposes *accidents* to subsist without any subject, to which they belong. They allow there are the *accidents* of bread remaining; there are the figure, colour, smell and taste; but the *substance*, it seems, is quite changed, and become the body of Christ. But what are they the accidents of? Not of bread, for there is no bread left. Not of the body of Christ, for that is a *spiritual* body, and *exists after the manner of spirits*, whatever that is. Then they must subsist of *themselves*, and without any subject to which they belong: And then accidents become *substances*, for 'tis the property of a substance to *subsist of itself*; and then the same individual thing will have two contrary natures, it will be accident and substance too. The whole

* Dan. ix. 21.

whole subject must be changed, accident and substance too, if there be any change at all, for they necessarily subsist together, and no accident can remain when the subject of it is gone; as you cannot conceive *extension* without something extended, or *consciousness* and thought without a spirit. This is indeed supposing a building without a foundation, and raising castles in the air. This once occasioned a smart repartee from a *Physician* in *France* of the *Roman* communion, who, when prest by an *English* Minister * with this difficulty, pleasantly said in the close of the debate, He thought the Fathers of *Trent* ought to have been condemned to feed only on *accidents* of bread all their lives, for bringing so great an incumbrance upon their faith.

If it be said after all, and as the last refuge, That it is to be considered in the nature of a *miracle*, and as the effect of divine power, and is not to be measured by the ordinary course of nature, and maxims of reason and philosophy; Why can't he turn bread into a body, as well as *water into wine*, and multiply a *few loaves* to feed a great *multitude*? Nothing is impossible to Omnipotence, and 'tis great presumption to *limit the Holy One*?† I answer, That this is not a *miracle*, but a *contradiction*: “A miracle is an extraordinary work of God, above the
“ ordinary powers of nature, evident to sense, and
“ designed for conviction.” So were all the miracles of *Moses* and *Christ*. But here is nothing of the nature of a miracle, for there is no evidence to sense, or any ground of conviction to the mind. 'Tis indeed a flat *contradiction* to nature, which is no object of power, and impossible to any power, most of all to the divine Power, which is always founded in the highest reason, and governed by the greatest wisdom.

The

* The late learned and pious Mr. Will. Lorimor.

† *Profession of Catholick Faith, extracted out of the Council of Trent.*
p. 28.

The difference in the cases is very evident, for when the water was turned into wine, it ceased to be water, and lost all the properties of it; it had no longer the colour and taste of water, but was sublimated and enriched into wine. The case should stand thus to make it parallel, That the water was *confidently said* to be turned into wine, and yet had all the properties of water still, and none of the properties of wine; and then I doubt it would no more have been thought a miracle, than it would have satisfied the guests at the feast. So the *loaves* were multiplied by the power of Christ, by the addition of more loaves, and this we can easily conceive possible to divine Power. But here bread is supposed to be turned into a human body, and into as many bodies as there were crumbs in those loaves, and yet has nothing but the appearance of bread all the while, and without any form and figure, or any property of a body at all.

If none of these are contradictions, it will not be easy to say what is; and if any one contradiction can be fairly fastened upon it, it *cannot* be true, and is *impossible* to be the sense of these words.

I add further,

§. 6. They were not so understood in the *first ages*, and by the *earliest writers* of the Christian church. There is scarce any thing in which the church of *Rome* puts in a stronger claim, or makes a louder boast, than the sense of *antiquity*, and the judgment of the *antient Fathers*, tho' in points peculiar to Popery, and in which they differ from the Protestants, scarce any thing is less fair, or more unjust. Now tho' we acknowledge nothing as an *authoritative rule of faith*, but the holy scriptures, the great charter of the Christian church; yet it must be allowed that the first ages and first writers, especially for the first three hundred years, had some opportunities and advantages of knowing the sense of scripture,

scripture, beyond what we have at this distance of time, especially with relation to matters of *fact*, and the *practice* of the church; and we refuse not their arbitration in the present case.

Tho' it would not be proper in a popular auditory, nor stand with the limits of a single discourse, to go distinctly into this argument now; yet thus much I may safely venture to undertake, That no christian writer, of whom we have any records remaining, for more than five hundred years, ever spake of Transubstantiation, as now understood in the church of *Rome*, neither *name* nor *thing*. They give no such sense of these words, but speak many things which are contrary, and inconsistent with it. I confess they sometimes speak of the sacrament, in their popular discourses, with strong figures of rhetorick, and high expressions of reverence and affection, as they also do of baptism; and as devotional writers often do in other subjects, as well as this, especially where there has been no controversy about them; but they nevertheless declare their sense of this matter in a great variety of expressions. Thus * *Justin Martyr*, and † *Irenæus* in the second century; ‡ *Tertullian*, § *Origen*, and ** *Cyprian* in the third; †† *Eusebius*, †† *Basil*, §§ *Chrysostome*,
in

* Apol. 2. 98. Τροφή ἐξ ἧς αἶμα καὶ σαρκὶς κατὰ μεταβολὴν τρέπονται ἡμῶν. Dial. cum Trypho. Τύπος ἦν τῷ ἄρτι τῆς εὐχαριστίας ὃν εἰς ἀνάμνησιν τοῦ παθὸς Ἰησοῦς Χρίστος ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν παρέδωκε ποιεῖν.

† Adv. Hæres. l. 4. c. 34. Sed Eucharistia ex duabus rebus consistens, terrena & cælesti.

‡ Adv. Marcion. l. 1. Quo ipsum corpus representat. L. 4. c. 4. Figura corporis mei.

§ In Matt. xv. περὶ τυπικῆ καὶ συμβολικῆ σώματος αὐτοῦ.

** Epist. 63. ad Cecil. Sola [aqua] Christi sanguinem non potest exprimere. In aqua vidimus populum intelligi, in vino ostendi sanguinem Christi.

†† Dem. Evang. l. 5. c. 10. διὰ συμβολῶν τῷ σώματος αὐτοῦ, L. 5. τὴν εἰκόνα τῆς ἰδίας σωματός.

‡† Epist. 289.— ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ὁ ἱερεὺς, ἐπιδίδωσι τὴν μερίδα.

§§ In Cor i. Hom. 24. Τί γὰρ ἔστιν ὁ ἄρτος; σῶμα Χριστοῦ. Τί δὲ πίνοντα. οἱ μεταλαμβάνοντες; σῶμα Χριστοῦ. Οὐχὶ σῶματα πολλὰ, ἀλλὰ σῶμα.

in the *fourth*, speak of being *nourished* with the food of the Eucharist; and say, it consists of an *earthly* and *heavenly part*; that 'tis the *image* and *figure* of his body, and *expresses* and *represents* it.

* *St. Austin*, who lived in the *fifth* century, and is in great esteem in the church of *Rome*, calls it a *figure* and *sign* of his body and blood; and says, his *body is in heaven*, and the sacrament is the *resemblance* and *representation* of it. He says expressly, That it is a *figurative speech*, and must be *spiritually understood*. † *Theodoret* says, He *honoured the symbols with the name of his body and blood*, not *changing nature*, but *adding grace to nature*; and that they remain in their *former substance, figure and appearance*; and may be *seen and handled as before*. ‡ *Pope Gelasius*, who lived in the same century says, It *ceases not to be the substance and nature of bread and wine*, but is the *image and resemblance of Christ's body and blood*. 'Tis often called by later writers, The *sacrament of remembrance*, the *pledge* of an absent friend; the *symbols* and *antitype* of his body.

S

There

σῶμα ἔν. Homil. 17. in Epist. ad Heb. — μᾶλλον δὲ ἀναμνησιν ἐργαζόμεθα θυσίας.

* *Cont. Adamant. c. 12.* Non enim Dominus dubitavit dicere, *Hæc est corpus*, cum daret *signum* corporis sui. He lays down a rule to distinguish the *literal* and *figurative* sense of *scripture*, and assigns the sacrament as an instance of the latter. *De doctr. Christ. l. 3. c. 16.* And *de Verb. Apost. Sermon. 2.* Si quod in sacramento visibiliter sumitur, in ipsa veritate spiritualiter manducetur, spiritualiter bibatur.

† Τὰ ὁρώμενα σύμβολα τῇ τῷ σώματος καὶ αἵματος προηγορίας τελέμεν, καὶ τὴν φύσιν μεταβολῶν ἀλλὰ τὴν χάριν τῇ φύσει προσθεσικῶν. Dial. 1.

‡ *De duab. naturis in Christo.* Et tamen non esse definit substantia vel natura panis & vini; & certe imago & similitudo corporis & sanguinis Christi, in actione mysteriorum celebrantur. So, Sacramentum memorix. *Aust. cont. Faust. l. 20. c. 21.* Aliquod pignus derelinquat. *Hier. in 1 Cor. ii.* τῆς ἐκείνου ἀρχέτυπον, & τῷ ὄντος σώματος ἀντίτυπα. *Theod. Dial. i.* Ἐν τούτῳ γὰρ ὅτε δίδεται σοὶ σῶμα, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ ὅτε δίδεται τὸ αἷμα. *Cyr. Catech. Myst. 4.*

There is no antient *liturgy* which contains any prayer to this purpose at the *Eucharist*; that in the * *Clementine Constitutions*, and those ascribed to † *St. Basil*, and ‡ *Ambrose*, plainly express the contrary. The great Council of *Constantinople* in the eighth century, which condemned the worship of images, declared, That it was the *image of his living body*, which was made, *after a precious and honourable manner* **. And this is acknowledged by some of their own schoolmen, of the greatest authority and esteem; as *Scotus*, *Durandus*, *Ockam*, &c.

On the contrary, It was first started by a Monk at the beginning of the *seventh* century; and was afterwards countenanced by the second council of *Nice*, which first introduced the worship of images, and with a design to support it, in opposition to the Council of *Constantinople*. It was afterwards brought into the *Latin* church at the latter end of the ninth century; †† but was contested and opposed for above three hundred years, by many of the most learned and pious men of those times; and was not made an article of faith till the fourth *Lateran* Council,

* Προσφέρομεν σοι τὸν ἄρτον τῆτον καὶ τὸ ποτήριον τῆτο. We offer to thee this *bread* and this *cup*. l. 4, c. 12.

† Προσθέντες τὰ ἀντίτυπα τῆ ἁγίας σάρματος καὶ αἵματος τῆ Χριστοῦ. Antitypes of his body and blood.

‡ L. 4. c. 5. Which is the *figure* of the body and blood of Christ our Lord.

** Conc. Constant. Act. 6.

†† *Paschasius Rathbartus* first formed it into shape and brought it into the Western church, but was vigorously opposed by *Rabanus Maurus* Archbishop of *Mentz*, the most considerable man of those times, who says, It was an *error newly broached*, and which he opposed with all his might. Epist. ad Heribaldum. c. 33. And there was a famous contest for a long time by *Berengarius*, which occasioned the meeting of two synods, and several hearings before the Pope; and by *Bartram* and others, afterwards. See a learned and ingenious discourse of the late Mr. *Thomas Goodwin* of *Pinner*: *Transubstantiation a peculiar Doctrine of the Church of Rome*, 1688.

Council; under Pope *Innocent* the third, in the twelfth century; and that in a very imperious and unprecedented manner, by the meer authority of the Pope, without the concurrence and consent of the Synod; * the same Pope who *deposed* our King *John*, and first set up the *Inquisition*. It was not properly established till the council of *Trent* in the fifteenth century. This is the pedigree of this spurious offspring; these the circumstances of it's conception and birth. 'Tis so far then from being any doctrine of the *antient church*, that 'tis a *novel* doctrine, of a late date; † brought into the church in a corrupt and ignorant age, by an ill man, to serve a bad purpose, and in a very extraordinary manner.

§. 7. It naturally leads to great *immoralities*; to *idolatry*, *cruelty*, and *profaneness*. 'Tis not a meer abstract *speculation* which rests in the mind, but it affects the *practice*. The bread and wine being supposed to be changed into the body and blood of Christ, is adored with the ‡ *supreme worship which is given to the true God*, by solemn prayer, the lowest prostrations, and highest marks of homage. Now whatever worship is due to the body of Christ together with his soul and divinity; if it appears from what has been said, that there is no such thing, or any body of Christ in the sacrament at all, but only bread and wine, set apart in commemoration of it; then it must be acknowledged, that all this homage and devotion is misplaced, and is worshipping a meer creature, and without any warrant and appointment, which is the true notion of idolatry. And tho' I know 'tis said, That however in that case, 'tis only *simple error*, and not idolatry, because the

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homage

* Matt. Paris in ann. 1215.

† In synaxi Transubstantiationem serò definivit Ecclesia. *Erasm.* in Cor. vii. p. 472. Edit. *Basil.* 1535.

‡ Conc. Trid. Sess. 13. c. 5.

homage is designed to be paid to Christ, and not to bread and wine; that then indeed they are mistaken, but not idolaters; yet I think we justly charge the *opinion* and *practice* with idolatry, for I meddle not with the *persons* of men; at least till they have fairly answered our arguments, and sufficiently supported their own; because it has the nature of idolatry in it, and is, worshipping a creature; to be sure as much as worshipping by mistake an *unconsecrated* host, which some of their writers allow to be so; and their intention will not alter the nature of things, whatsoever abatement it may be of the crime. Besides that this would justify the *Jewish* and *Heathen* idolatry, which is so severely condemned in the scripture; and is contrary to one great *design* of Christianity, which was to bring men to the worship of the true God, and banish all idolatry out of the world; to *turn men from idols to serve the living and true God*. I am sure so many things are required, in the qualification and intention of the priest, and the qualities of the bread, to make the consecrated host a proper object of adoration; that it must needs, upon their own principles, be full of hazard and almost impossible to be secure from the danger of it. And that cannot be a *safe* way of religion which is liable to so great an evil in their daily worship.

And certainly 'tis the greatest instance of *inhumanity* to eat the flesh and blood of any human person, and much more of the *Saviour* of the world; and especially in the case of the *Virgin Mary*, who if she ever communicated, which I suppose will not be denied, did eat the flesh and blood of her own child; as *Saturn* is fabled by the *Heathen* poets, to have devoured his own children: Besides the numberless lives which have been sacrificed to this idol, and the altars stained with the blood of martyrs. The great symbol of union and love has been made an engine of hatred and violence, of the most unchristian

christian anathema's, and inhuman cruelties, in many parts of the world, in former, and later ages.

And 'tis the highest instance of *prophanation*, to eat the *real* body of Christ, his very *flesh* and *blood*, which then must partly turn into the nourishment of the body, and partly go into the draught; which is too horrid to bear a thought, or admit an aggravation. I only add,

§. 8. 'Tis an infinite *scandal*, especially to infidels and unbelievers, and an effectual *prejudice* to the propagation and entertainment of the gospel in the world. 'Tis the highest offence to a great part of the *Christian* world, to see men worship the host, and fall down to a bit of bread. The greatest part of the Greek * church, the *Moscovites*, *Armenians*, the *Nestorians*, the *Maronites*, *Ethiopians*, and the vast empire of the *Abyssines*, &c. and all the *Protestant* churches, which together make a greater body of Christians than those in the communion of the *church of Rome*, have an irreconcilable prejudice to the doctrine, and can never unite upon this foot. They ought according to the apostle's rule, upon this account, to remove the offence out of the way: † *That no man put a stumbling-block, or occasion of falling in his brother's way*: And, ‡ *Give none offence, neither to the Jew nor the Gentile, nor the church of God*.

But what is more considerable, 'tis an infinite prejudice to the *unbelieving* world, and hinders the progress of the gospel wherever it comes to be known. The *Jewish*, the *Mahometan*, the *Pagan* world, look upon it as monstrous and ridiculous, for men to make their God, and eat him when they

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have

* Mr. *Claud.* Doct. Cathol. de l'Euchar. *Smith* De statu hodierno Ecclesiæ Græcæ. *Ludolph.* Histor. Ethiop. l. 3. c. 5. n. 45.

† Rom. xiv. 13.

‡ 1 Cor. x. 32.

have done. It reflects an infinite dishonour upon the Christian doctrine, and exposes it to scorn and contempt. * They can never bring men to believe *Christianity* to be true, but upon reasons which will prove *Transubstantiation* to be false, and there will be just so much reason against the one as there can be for the other. Indeed it destroys the great evidence upon which it ought to be received, and which was designed to convince the world. And tho' their *zeal* and *industry* in propagating the Christian religion in heathen countries, may justly deserve commendation, and in some respects be an example to others; yet we cannot but detest the shameless savings, and deceitful shifts of their *Missionaries*, who conceal and dissemble the matter, and attempt to reconcile them by scandalous compliance, and false pretences; for the truth of which I appeal to the late conduct of the *Jesuits* in *China*.

If it be said, That this is nothing peculiar to *their* doctrine, that it gives offence to the world, for so did the doctrine of the *cross* at first; and the preaching of *Christ crucified*, by the apostles, was † *To the Jews a stumbling-block*, and to *the Greeks foolishness*: I answer; It was so through their own *fault*; from the prejudices of their own minds, and the false notions they had entertained; not from the *nature* of the thing. There was nothing absurd and unreasonable, but the greatest wisdom and kindness, in saving the world by the death of Christ, which the church of *Rome* acknowledges as well as we: But the case is otherwise here; the *matter* is infinitely absurd, and shocking to all reasonable nature. The offence arises from the nature of the thing, and is a scandal, not only to the unbelieving world, but to far the greater part of the Christian world too.

I shall

* Ecquam tam amentem esse putas, qui illud quo vescatur, Deum credat esse? *Cicer. de natur. Deor. l. 3.*

† 1 Cor. i.

I shall deduce this *corollary* from what has been said, That the *adoration* of the host; the *sacrifice* of the Mass as a propitiation for the quick and the dead; and the communion *in one kind*, are utterly groundless, and without foundation; for as they all go upon the supposition of Transubstantiation, and entirely depend upon it, so if the foundation is removed, they must necessarily fall too.

I shall conclude with this *practical reflection* upon the whole. What just matter of *astonishment* is it, on the one hand, that so many nations of men, many of whom are of exquisite *learning* and refined *sense*; many, I doubt not, truly pious and devout; should ever be brought to agree in so *complicated an absurdity*, without any necessity, or probability, against all reason and possibility, and to so great a mischief and inconvenience to the Christian interest, with so little shadow of reason for it, and so many substantial and undeniable reasons against it. How unspeakable are the prejudices of education, the bias of worldly interest, and the awes of authority and power! One cannot forbear thinking of those awful words of the apostle; * *Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, for this cause God sent them strong delusions to believe a lie*. No wonder that men of freer minds, or greater honesty, in popish countries, are often tempted, when they apprehend so great an absurdity in the Christian doctrine, to throw off all belief of the Christian revelation, and become *secret Deists*; which is said to be the case especially in *Italy*, from whence this doctrine sprang, and where it is triumphant.

And what reason have we, on the other hand, to be thankful to God, for the invaluable blessing of the *Reformation*, which delivered us from the tyranny and superstition of the church of *Rome*, and restored in so great a measure the *rights of conscience*,

and *purity* of the Christian *worship*. We partake of the ordinances of the gospel, according to the institution of Christ, without the gross mixtures of superstition and idolatry. May it spread and prevail, in God's good time, thro' the whole Christian world, and be carried every where to a closer conformity to the Christian rule; may we never forfeit so great a blessing by our unworthiness and abuse; but ever enjoy it ourselves, and transmit it down to the latest posterity.

AP-

A P P E N D I X.

I SHALL add three historical passages relating to this subject, which I believe will be allowed to be very remarkable.

One is the noble challenge of the excellent Bishop Jewel in a sermon at *Paul's-Cross*, 1560. *If any learned man of all our adversaries, or if any learned men who are alive, be able to bring any one sufficient sentence, out of any one catholick doctor or father, or out of any old general council, or out of the holy scriptures of God; or any one example of the primitive church, whereby it may be clearly and plainly proved, That there was any private mass in the whole world at that time,----or that the People were then taught to believe that Christ's body is really, substantially, corporally, carnally, or naturally, in the sacrament,----I promise then that I will give over, and subscribe to him. But I am well assured that they shall never be able truly to alledge one sentence; and because I know it, therefore I speak it, lest you haply should be deceived.* Works, p. 58.

When Cardinal Perron was ask'd by some of his friends, in his last sickness, What he thought of *Transubstantiation*? He answered, That it was a MONSTER. And when they asked him, How then he had writ so copiously and learnedly about it? He replied, That he had done the utmost which is *wit* and

A P P E N D I X.

and *parts* had enabled him, to colour over this abuse, and render it plausible; but that he had done like those who employ all their force to defend an ill cause. *Drelincourt, Reponse à letres de Monseig. le Prince Ernest aux cinq Ministres de Pari. Genève 1664.*

The last is a passage of Archbishop *Usher*, a prodigy of learning and humility; who having been so happy as to convert several *Roman* Priests from their errors, and enquiring diligently of them, What they, who said *Masse* every day, and were not obliged to confess *venial sins*, could have to trouble their Confessors with? They ingenuously acknowledged to him, That the chiefest part of their constant confession, was their *Infidelity* as to the point of *Transubstantiation*; and for which they mutually acquitted and absolved one another. Preface to Archbishop *Wake's Discourse of the holy Eucharist in two points, of the real Presence and Adoration, 1688.* who bore a noble part in the *Popish Controversy* in the Reign of King *James the second*.

*The Veneration of SAINTS and IMAGES, as
taught and practis'd in the Church of
Rome, examined.*

A
S E R M O N

PREACH'D AT

Salters-Hall, Feb. 20, 1734-5.

By O. HUGHES, D. D.

Ὁ το κλισμα προσκυνων, καν επ' ονοματι τῃ Χριστῃ τῃτο ποιει, Ειδωλολατρης
εστι, Χριστῃ ονομα τῷ εδωλω θεμενος.

Greg. Nyssen. de Placilla Fun. orat. V. 2. p. 965.

ISAIAH xlii. 8.

*I am the LORD, that is my name, and
my glory will I not give to another, neither
my praise to graven images.*

AMONGST other things objected by
Protestants against the church of *Rome*,
her idolatrous worship is not the least con-
siderable. This is indeed a very high
charge, and the Papists would have reason for their
complaints, if it could not be sufficiently support-
ed: But this I think it easily may.

Their

Their veneration of Saints and Images cannot, I apprehend, be clear'd from the charge of idolatry; notwithstanding all their endeavours to represent their doctrine on this head in the most harmless and inoffensive light.

'Tis my province in the course of this lecture, to discuss this subject: I will endeavour to do it in the most impartial manner; and will appeal to your own understandings for the verdict, whether the doctrine and practice of the church of *Rome* is chargeable with idolatry on this account, or not.

In order to this, 'twill be proper in the first place to state the true notion of Idolatry; and this I take to be, *the giving religious worship to any but the great God*. I ground the definition upon our Saviour's words; the devil, we are told made him an insolent proposal of all the kingdoms of the earth, in case he would fall down and worship him: Christ parlies not with the temptation, but rejects it with the highest resentment, *Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* * The objection that the term [only] is not in the original *Hebrew*, from whence CHRIST quotes the passage, is an idle cavil: for allow it be not *expressly* there, yet if it be not *implicitly* and *virtually* there; and the words are not to be understood in this exclusive sense, our Saviour's answer is nothing to the purpose; and the devil might have reply'd upon this supposition, tho' God must be worshipp'd, yet others may be worshipp'd too. Besides; our blessed Lord by having adopted the words for his own has made them gospel, and has taught us in what sense we are to understand that law of *Moses*, if we were at a loss before how to interpret it; and he does by this likewise intimate to us, that the law is of perpetual obligation.

Nor

* Matt. iv. 10. Vid. Deut. vi. 13. and x. 12, 20. and xiii. 4.

Nor can any thing be more exprefs in confirmation of this notion of Idolatry, than the first commandment, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before ME*; * i. e. says the learned *Grotius*, besides me. † I think the commandment should rather be read, *there shall be to thee no other God before me*; the verb is in the singular number and so explain'd by the *Chaldee*; and so it excludes every other being from any share in religious worship, appropriating it entirely to DEITY: The *Arabic* version understands this to be the sense of the command, rendring it thus; *Let nothing be adored by thee besides myself*. Paying religious worship to any being, or adoring it, is making a God of it. I believe, all interpreters agree in this as the true meaning of the commandment, that we are not to worship any other God, but the LORD JEHOVAH. The Papists themselves allow, that to give proper divine honour to a creature is idolatry and a breach of this commandment; but they hope to free themselves from such an imputation, by a set of distinctions framed for that purpose; the force of which I shall enquire into hereafter: “We are forbidden, say they, by the first commandment to worship any creature for a God, or “give it the honour which is due to God.” ‡

The object of idolatry is a false God, that which really is no God, tho' honour'd as such by men. The apostle *Paul* supports this notion in that remarkable passage, *We know that an idol is nothing in the World, and that there is none other God but one*. § By which we are to understand, not that an idol has no real being, or existence in the world; for the matter of an idol is for the most part some real thing: But the meaning is, an idol is no God

* Exod. xx. 3.

† Vid. Grot. ad loc. The LXX read it *πλην εμε*: and the *Chaldee*, *Syriac* and *Arabic* versions put the same construction upon it.

‡ Abridgment of the Christian doctrine; said in the title page to be printed. *Basilea* Anno 1680; tho' it was published in the college *De propaganda fide* at Rome.

§ 1 Cor. viii. 4.

God in itself and only so in the conceit of the fond idolater, and therefore not worthy of divine honours. In this sense the Gods of the Heathens are said to be idols; *for all the gods of the people are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.** The original word, translated *idols*, signifies *not-Gods*, or *no-Gods*, or *vanities*, *nothingnesses*.† 'Tis fit to take notice here, that the foundation, upon which the great God claims all religious worship as appropriate to himself, is such as makes it for ever impossible to give it to any other without an high affront to his Majesty: 'Tis upon the foot of creation; *All the Gods of the people are idols, but the LORD made the heavens*: GOD is absolute monarch and lord over all created nature; and he expects the homage of all his creatutes; *All nations, whom thou hast made, shall come and worship before thee, oh Lord, and shall glorify thy name, for thou art great and doest wondrous things; thou art GOD ALONE.‡*

Having thus stated the notion of idolatry, the merits of the cause betwixt us and the church of Rome are now to be tried; and by what follows, I think, it will evidently appear, that the veneration which Papists pay to *Saints* and *Images*, is justly charged to be idolatrous and antichristian.

It will be proper, as the subject is double, to consider separately,

The veneration paid to *Saints* in the church of Rome; and

The regard they shew to *Images*, in their religious worship.

I. As to the high veneration the *Romanists* profess to *Saints*; there are several particulars considerable, such as, erecting temples and chapels in honour of them; dedicating altars to them; appointing holidays

* 1 Chron. xvi. 26.

† Vid. Drus. Obs. sacr. l. 16. c. 9. Vid. etiam Merc. Lex. ad voc. *Idol.*

‡ Psal. viii. 10.

days to be celebrated in remembrance of them ; making vows, confessing sins, and directing solemn praises to them for blessings receiv'd ; offering sacrifices to GOD for the honour of the saints ; and particularly the sacrifice of the mass, which is surely a most religious act, forasmuch as CHRIST is said to be offer'd in it to the Father ; placing a confident hope and trust in them ; and in consequence hereof calling upon them not only as intercessors, but as the immediate protectors from all evils, and the liberal distributors of all blessings, both of grace and glory ; besides a most stupid and superstitious regard to what they call their relicks.

These are all Instances of the *Romish* veneration of *Saints*, which might be severally consider'd ; but I shall insist upon one only, namely, *their invocation or praying to Saints*.

I presume, I need not be more explicit and say, *departed Saints*: There is no danger of the church of *Rome's* being so much as suspected of too high a regard to the Saints of GOD while they are living ; so far from it, that 'tis her known character to persecute and destroy the living, while they pretend to honour the dead ; and in truth, the greatest piety cannot secure from her merciless hands, where any have courage enough to think for themselves in the matters of their GOD, or prefer the infallible directions of his word to the traditions and inventions of men, contrary to Scripture, and oftentimes repugnant to common sense. This is crime enough to expose the most strictly good man to the most grievous sufferings ; for as to these the church of *Rome* may vie with all the nations of the earth ; never more cruelty practis'd by any set of men ; and perhaps she is answerable for shedding more innocent blood, than all the religions and churches in the world put together.

But to expose this merciless disposition is not my province; you may expect it with the utmost advantage from a more able hand.

I return to my subject, INVOCATION OF SAINTS. Prayer is one of the principal branches of religious worship, which is the peculiar prerogative of the great God: If therefore men make the object of it a creature, then are they guilty of downright idolatry. But that I may be in no danger of carrying the charge against the *Romanists* too high, I will

I. Represent and fairly state the doctrine and practice of the church of *Rome* in this affair of *praying to the Saints*. The main difficulty here will be, to fasten any thing upon the Papists, which they will own as their doctrine; for they have got a trick of denying every thing, which they are charged with, as an absurdity in their worship. The *Romish* religion, they tell us, is quite alter'd from what it once was; nor will they adhere to any decrees of Popes, or councils, or the determinations of their most applauded champions, any further than they answer their purpose, even tho' all the while their practice is exactly agreeable to them.

The council of *Trent* conven'd in the 16th century, is what they pretend most to regard; they universally agree to this, as to *doctrinals*; tho' the *Gallican* church has never receiv'd or submitted to it, as to *discipline*. 'Tis a clause in Pope *Pius's* creed, which no Papist will scruple to subscribe:
 “ I undoubtedly receive and profess all things de-
 “ liver'd, defined and declar'd by the sacred ca-
 “ nons and general councils, and particularly by
 “ the holy council of *Trent*.” *

This famous council then has decreed in reference to the matter now in debate, as follows;
 “ The holy synod commands all bishops, and others
 “ whose

* *Vid.* Profess. of Catholick Faith, p. 5. A small book lately printed, and now in use for the reception of converts into the church.

“ whose office and business it is to teach; that
 “ they diligently instruct the faithful concerning
 “ the intercession and invocation of Saints; teach-
 “ ing them, that the Saints reigning with CHRIST
 “ do offer up their prayers to GOD for men;
 “ that it is good and profitable humbly to invo-
 “ cate the Saints; and to fly to their prayers, help
 “ and assistance, for the obtaining blessings from
 “ GOD thro’ his son JESUS CHRIST.” To
 oblige to this practice the same council adds, that
 “ Those who deny the Saints should be invoked,
 “ or assert that they do not pray for men, or that
 “ an address to them that they would pray for us
 “ is idolatry, or repugnant to the word of GOD,
 “ and injurious to the honour of JESUS CHRIST
 “ the one Mediator between GOD and men, or
 “ say ’tis a foolish thing to supplicate the Saints
 “ reigning in heaven by the voice or the mind:”

All such persons, who dare say any of these things,
 are in the judgment of this *infallible* council pro-
 nounced to *think impiously*. And a little lower, af-
 ter having mention’d some other decrees about re-
 licks, pictures and images, ’tis added as what I
 suppose is to be referr’d to the whole chapter;
 “ But if any one shall teach or think contrary to
 “ these decrees, let him be accursed.”* So that
 if the power and authority of the church of *Rome*
 be equal to her imposing and malicious spirit, every
 man who thinks contrary to these impious opini-
 ons, must necessarily be damned. Blessed be GOD,
 the rewards and punishments of eternity are not
 at the disposal of fallible men.

In defiance of all their curses, we may venture
 to pronounce concerning this their doctrine and
 practice, that it is idolatrous and cannot be accep-
 table to the great GOD.

It is true indeed they have endeavour’d to soften
 and disguise their own doctrine, that so it might
 appear

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* Vid. Conc. Trid. Sess. 25.

appear with more advantage, or at least have its native deformity concealed. In all the disputes betwixt *Papists* and *Protestants* this has been their method. The present Archbishop of *Canterbury*, Dr. *Wake*, who deserves to be mentioned with honour for the noble part he bore in the controversies in King *James* II^d's reign, represents this humour of the *Papists* in a very strong manner; "Popery, says he, in its proper colours is so unlike Catholick Christianity, that 'tis vain ever to hope to promote it if it appears in its own shape. It is necessary therefore, that the religion, like the prophet, should come to us in *sheeps cloathing*, and the heresy be made look as orthodox as is possible. Some things are denied, others mollified, all disguised, and a double benefit thereby obtain'd; Popery is to be received as a very innocent harmless thing; and the *Protestants*, especially the ministers and first reformers, represented to the world, as a sort of people that have supported themselves by calumnies and lies, and made a noise about errors and corruptions, which are no where to be found; but in their own brains or books, but which the church of *Rome* detests no less than we." *

The same method are the emissaries of *Rome* taking now; palliating every thing that appears shocking; striking out or explaining away those articles of faith, which they have not been able to vindicate against the force of objectors; and thus making a sort of new religion that may be less distastful. The books they now publish amongst us, represent most of the controverted articles of faith, in a very different manner from what their church does really profess, and their people continually practise. For you must know, that there is a vast difference betwixt Popery as it

* Present State of the Controv. &c. publish'd 1687, p. 10.

it is set to view in *England*, and what it is as exercised in *Italy*, or any other Popish countries, where the civil government is subjected to it, and it is able without check or reserve to practise all its arts, and to appear without disguise with all its pageantry and pomp. But Protestants must not be told all at once; there are several mysterious and important things, which are not fit to be communicated to those, whom they are endeavouring to gain over to the *Romish* church: These things must be reserv'd, till their proselytes are got into safe custody; and afterwards when they have given away all liberty of judging for themselves, and are brought to believe every thing the church says to be true, then they may be trusted with the discovery of even the greatest absurdities; for they have now gone too far to recede; and if they discover any hesitation, or give suspicion of their being shocked at such discoveries, their sincerity is immediately question'd; and where the church has power in her hands, they must expect some motherly correction for their untowardness; and 'tis well if they escape being burnt for hereticks.

It will be proper here to consider the several evasions, whereby they think to excuse their worship of the *Saints* from the charge of idolatry; and the several arguments, by which they support the doctrine and practice of their church in this matter.

1. They tell us, that the veneration they pay to *Saints* is very different from that honour, which they give to GOD. "There is no comparison between the one and the other: No, God forbid, *say they*, for this would be a high treason against his divine Majesty."*

To support themselves herein, they have forged a number of distinctions, which if fairly examined cannot be of any service to their cause. They men-

* Prof. of Cath. faith, p. 39.

tion several kinds and degrees of worship; *supreme* and *subordinate*; *absolute* and *relative*; *terminative* and *transient*; *proper* and *improper*; *primary*, and *secondary*; these and many other distinctions they have contrived to puzzle the cause and delude the ignorant people.

I answer: *The nature of the thing will not admit such subtle distinctions.* Religious worship is but one, as the object of it is G O D alone. 'Tis plain our Saviour understood it so; for in his answer to the devil (which I have mention'd before) he tells him that G O D alone is to be worshipp'd. If there were degrees in religious worship, we may presume that the devil himself had so much modesty as not to ask the highest degree of it; nay he ask'd no more, than what the church of *Rome* seems to me to pay to *Saints* and *Images* every day; *Fall down and worship me*, or by falling down worship and do honour to me: the outward act as it seems would have contented the devil. But this *Christ* refuses; and for this reason, because we are to worship the L O R D our G O D, and serve him ONLY: And this must be understood to determine, that not the least degree of religious worship is to be given to a creature; whether it be supposed to be a good or a bad spirit; a living Saint in heaven or a wooden one on earth.

Again; *The sacred scripture no where mentions any such distinctions*: If it did, we should have heard of it from our adversaries long ago, but they do not pretend any such thing; their particular doctrines have no foundation in the book of G O D, and therefore they give us very little trouble on this head: They derive their original elsewhere, and are generally the offspring of vicious or aspiring minds. *St. Paul* tells us, that he deliver'd the whole counsel of G O D; if therefore he says nothing of these distinctions, 'tis plain they have no foundation,

foundation, nor are they of any use in the church of CHRIST.

Further; *The common people neither know nor observe these distinctions*; consequently they cannot plead the distinctions to excuse themselves from the charge of idolatry. Tho' by the by, I doubt not but the poor ignorant devotees of the church of *Rome* are in a less hazardous state than their wise and learned men; who have opportunities and advantages of knowing better, but wilfully shut their eyes against the light. These subtle and nice distinctions may serve as toys for children to play with at present, but will not stand the test at the great day.

Once more; *Even their own learned men differ with respect to these distinctions, and do not equally maintain them.* Their grand advocate Cardinal *Bellarmino* scruples not to term the worship due to Saints, *an eminent kind of Adoration*:* And says another man of great renown amongst them; "We honour the Saints not only with that worship, which we pay to men, who excel in virtue, &c. or any other dignity; but also with *divine worship* and honour, which is an act of religion." † This we take to be downright idolatry; but I suppose the writer himself had a distrust, that he had gone too far; and therefore to help himself off, he adds, "But we do not give divine worship and honour to the Saints for *themselves*; but for *GOD*, who hath made them Saints." But who can imagine, that he, whose name is *JEHOVAH*, will be thus trifled with, or suffer his glory to be thus given to others.

But there is another noted distinction which they have formed for their relief; we hear of it from every writer in the controversy; I mean their *Latria* and *Dulia*, two sorts of worship, as they assert; the former appropriate to *GOD*; but the other being of a lower nature may be paid to Angels

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and

* Præf. de Eccl. triumph.

† Azor. Inst. Mor. l. 9. c. 10.

and Saints; who having a middle sort of excellence between divine and human, are intitled to this middle sort of worship, betwixt that *honour* which is paid to God, and that *civil respect* which we pay to men according to their several ranks and excellencies. But this is a distinction without a difference; the promiscuous use of the words both by profane and sacred authors destroys the distinction entirely.* Besides; if there be any real difference in the signification of the two words, I apprehend that the latter, which the *Romanists* apply to Saints, is more emphatical and strong than the other; for it properly signifies one devoted to the service of another; and in this sense the *verb* is used by the evangelists,† *No man can serve two masters*; where the meaning must be, no man can be entirely devoted or addicted to two, especially two that are opposite to each other in their tempers and commands.‡

I cannot but observe here that several learned men of the *Romish* church have given up this long exploded distinction. *Ludovicus Vives* shows out of *Suidas* and *Xenophon*, that these two words are usually taken for one another.§ Their learned *Durandus* allows the same as to St. *Paul's* use of the word.** Cardinal *Bellarmino*†† and *Vasquez*‡‡ are forced to own the distinction to be unscriptural, and that both the *Hebrew* and *Greek* words are promiscuously used: But the learned *Nicolas Serrarius* speaks out most freely on this head, and tells us; that it is “The opinion of the most and the
“ wisest among them, that it is one and the same
“ virtue

* Hesychius. Glossa. LXX. Laurent. Valla ad Matt. iv. *Δουλεύειν* pro Dei cultu usurpatur, Acts xx. 19. Rom. xii. 11.

† Matt. vi. 24. and Luke xvi. 13.

‡ Vid. Gal. iv. 8, and *Whitby* ad loc.

§ Vid. Not. in Aug. de Civ. Dei.

** De rit. Eccl. Cath. p. 410.

†† De Sanct. Beat. l. i. c. 12.

‡‡ Disp. 93. in 3. p. Sum. c. 1.

“ virtue of religion, which containeth both *Latria* and *Dulia*.”*

But before I dismiss this head, 'twill be fit to observe that the *Romanists* have another sort of worship, which is peculiar to the Virgin *Mary*: She being a most eminent Saint above all the rest, must not be put off with that *low* worship they pay to Saints in common; but must have something, tho' of the same kind, yet of a much higher degree: This they call *Hyperdulia*; and 'tis fit every father should have the naming of his own child; this sort of worship is their own production, they may therefore have full liberty to call it what they please. It is truly a very *hyperbolical* sort of worship; and raises the blessed Virgin to a degree of honour, which she never expected; and which I dare say she would highly resent, if she was acquainted with it; and severely punish her fond votaries for their profaneness and blasphemies, if she had half the authority in heaven, which they talk of.

2. They tell us, that the honour which they pay to the Saints, they *terminate* on *GOD*, as its end: “ They reverence *the Saints* with an inferior honour as belonging to him, for his sake, and upon account of the gifts which they have received from him.”† The Bishop of *Condom*, the great reformer and new modeller of Popery in the last century, has taught them this evasion.‡ And here comes in their distinction of *relative* and *absolute* worship: which if it would serve their cause, will likewise justify all the idolatry of the Heathen world. I may as well worship the *Sun* for *GOD*'s sake and as belonging to him, as *St. Dominick*, *St. Francis*, or any other Saint the church of *Rome* can boast of; I am sure we are more be-

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holden

* In Litan. 2. q. 27.

† Prof. of Cath. faith, p. 39.

‡ Vid. Exp. Doct. Cath. Ch. §. 3. p. 4.

holden to that glorious luminary of heaven for the benefit the world receives from its heat and light, than for any good mankind has ever receiv'd from hundreds of nominal Saints in the *Romish* calendar. Besides, if I worship either the Sun, or Popish Saints, I shall not be excused from idolatry, by saying I act thus for GOD's sake, or because they belong to GOD; If this be the *reason* of my paying them worship, the *act* of worship terminates on the object 'tis directed to. This I suppose the *Romanists* will allow, when they are put in mind that according to their pretended scheme, the worship they pay to Saints is a very low degree of worship; and I presume they would not make the great GOD the object of any worship, but that which is supreme and most excellent. Besides; if I did a thing for GOD's sake, I ought surely to have GOD's warrant for it; or at least some signification, that my doing such a thing would be acceptable to his Majesty.

3. They excuse themselves further by saying, that if the honour they pay the Saints be judged too great, their church has no where *injoin'd* it, but only declared it to be in her opinion fit and lawful.

I allow that the Council of *Trent* says, 'tis good and profitable: A modest way of speaking! and would do no great harm, if every one was left to judge of the fitness and advantage of such a practice, and accordingly to follow it or not. But this is not the case. Even that same council goes further, and condemns all who think otherwise, as chargeable with *impious sentiments*. And besides; the creed of Pope *Pius IV*, compos'd by virtue of an order of this same council, (and lately publish'd) which every one in holy orders is obliged to subscribe and swear to, does expressly insinuate upon this as an article of faith; "I do constantly hold, that the Saints reigning together
" with

“ with CHRIST are to be invocated.” And this I think amounts to an injunction. But ’tis the constant way of all imposers to represent their impositions, only as what they recommend and think good and profitable: They injoin the observance of them, but are asham’d to own it.---- This worship of Saints, the Papiſts ſay, is not injoin’d: But if I do not practice, and declare my belief of it, I cannot be admitted as a *member* (or at least not as a *priest*) of *that* church; out of which it seems salvation is not to be found.---- Not injoin’d; but every priest solemnly swears to preach and teach it; and therefore if the common people are to be doers of the word as well as hearers of it, they must consider themselves as obliged to this practice.----- Not injoin’d; but if a man disbelieves it, or will not conform to it, he is immediately pronounced a Heretick, may lose his life for it, or however must expect everlasting damnation in the world to come.

4. We are told, the church of *Rome* means no more by addresses to the Saints, than merely to beg their prayers: *Ora pro nobis*. They only pray to Saints to pray for them; “ Prayer to Saints in “ any other sense, as if they were the authors or “ disposers of grace and glory, they condemn as “ superstitious and impious.”* So the new converts are taught; but they can’t expect to be believed by any, who have convers’d much with Popish writings; unless such only, who leave it to the infallible church to determine for them the sense of what they read. We disclaim her pretensions, and therefore take the liberty to question the truth of this excuse; and if I am not greatly mistaken, we are able to confront them to the intire satisfaction of all sincere inquirers after truth. Let any man read their books of devotion, their *hours*, their *offices*, their *rosaries*, their *breviaries*,
and

* Prof. of Cath. faith, p. 42.

and their *missals*, and then say whether it be not most daring confidence in the church of *Rome*, to say they only beg the Saints prayers; 'tis *protestatio contra factum* in the most egregious manner; they might with equal modesty tell us, when we read their books, that we don't see a word, a syllable or a letter in them; that it is all a *deceptio visus*: There's nothing but blank paper, never stain'd by ink; the words are only imprinted upon our imaginations. If my senses deceive me not, I read such and such direct addresses to the Saints; and if my reason fails me not, I am sure those prayers are more than a bare asking the Saints to pray for us.

In answer to this plea of the *Romish* church, I shall suggest a few hints,

1. They formally pray to the Saints, and with an equal shew of devotion, as they pay to *GOD* himself. These addresses to Saints are attended with all the solemnities of religious worship; they are mix'd in the same service with prayers to *GOD*; the supplicants are in the same humble posture upon their bended knees, or prostrate on the ground with hands and eyes lifted up to heaven; and all this in places dedicated to *GOD*'s service, and at the hours and seasons appointed for it.

2. They apply to the Saints for their *help and assistance* as well as their prayers: so the council of *Trent* teaches: * by which they mean more than their prayers, or else 'tis an idle tautology. No question but they meant more, tho' they did not care to speak more plainly: they left it open for others to act at pleasure; and to this is owing the monstrous heaps of blasphemous expressions, which zealous *Romanists* in the heat of their devotions have address'd to the Saints.

If they do not expect their *help*, as well as their prayers, what is meant by begging the Saints to *make haste to their relief*? and why do they pray to particular

* Ad eorum orationes, opem auxiliumque confugere. *Seff.* 25.

particular Saints in particular cases? Their Saint *Peter* sure must have the greatest interest in the court of heaven, next to the *Virgin Mary*; methinks they should run to him upon all occasions. But the truth is, they have borrow'd their theology from the *pagans*; and so they have a variety of Saints and Saintesses, to answer the Gods and Goddesses in the heathen world. And as the several kingdoms of the earth were formerly supposed to be under the protection of different Gods; in like manner are they now consign'd over to the guardianship of several *Romish* Saints. Time was when these nations of *Great Britain* and *Ireland* were taught to apply for help to St. *George*, St. *Andrew*, and St. *Patrick*. Blessed be GOD our eyes were open'd by the Reformation: And I trust we are now under a surer protection; that GOD himself will be our defence; and that neither *Rome* nor hell shall ever prevail against us.

The church of *Rome* has also particular Saints for particular disorders; which plainly intimates, that their trust is in the Saint apply'd to; or else they might beg the prayers of one Saint as well as another. They have St. *Anthony* for inflammations; St. *Petronilla* for the ague; St. *Sigismund* for fevers; St. *Margarita* for help in child-bearing; St. *Rock* for the plague, and infectious disorders; St. *Apollonia* for the tooth-ach; St. *Lucia* for sore eyes; St. *Ottilia* for deafness: There is a number of others, who preside over the *learned professions*, or over *particular societies*; or who will protect the *soldier* and the *sailor* from wars and tempests. Besides many hundreds more, which are not worth naming: There is however one Saint, who I fear does not come in for his share of devotions, tho' perhaps as much needed, and I question not as able to help as any of them; I would especially recommend it to the new converts to pay their first compliments to him; 'tis one St. *Mathurin*, who it seems

seems has an admirable nostrum for the cure of folly too.

To these their tutelary Saints the *Romanists* address their prayers, imploring their help, and asking from them such blessings as none but God can give. The mariners in the ship with *Jonah*, when in danger of being cast away, *cried every man unto his God*.^{*} Natural religion teaches to run to God, whom the winds and the waves obey: But a *papist* is directed to have recourse to the help of St. *Nicholas*. And thus in cases of sickness, or any other distress, we are to call upon God; the great physician and an almighty Saviour; he has encouraged us to *call upon him in the day of trouble*, he has bid us do so, he has promis'd *deliverance*, and then expects that we should *glorify* him.[†] To pray to the Saints therefore for these blessings, and to direct thanksgivings to them, when we are deliver'd from threatening evils, is an unwarrantable infringement of the prerogatives of God, and a giving his glory to others, which he will highly resent and punish.

Innumerable instances of such prayers to Saints for their help might be produced out of the devotional writings of *Romanists*, and such as are licensed and allow'd by authority. They can't deny that St. *Peter* is invoked, "to untie the bonds of their iniquity, and to open the gates of heaven to them:" and that all the apostles are called upon, "to absolve them from their sins, to heal all their spiritual disorders, and to increase their virtues." If their memories fail, we can tell them of prayers to Saints, that they would "illuminate; furnish with all grace; grant the pardon of sin; protect from the power of the devil; comfort under all troubles; bless with health of body; vigour of mind and peace of conscience; and finally that they would deliver them from hell, and raise them to the enjoyment of heaven."

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* Jon. i. 5.

† Psal. l. 15.

All this I presume is more than a bare asking their prayers. I am amazed that any in the *Romish* church should have the front to deny their praying for the Saints immediate help. One of their own writers tells us, that “ the prayers made to and deliver’d by the Saints are *better* than those made by CHRIST.”*

Their grand champion Cardinal *Bellarmino* by way of plea says; “ that tho’ the words used upon those occasions may seem to imply more, than a bare praying to the Saints to pray for us, yet this is the whole they intend.”† A sorry excuse truly ! I dare say they do not imagine, that all who use such prayers mean no more by them : How many thousands are there who use them without any such intention ? and how can the sense of a prayer be known but by the natural signification of the words used ? What is the reason that such forms have not long ago been alter’d and new modell’d and adjusted to the meaning of the words, when they have been so often objected against the Church of *Rome* ? Sure that *infallible* church can frame prayers in a more consistent manner, to make words and sense agree ; ’Tis plain the governors of that church do scandalously neglect the souls of men by not altering these forms, and so the ignorant are led into snares ; or else that they approve of such prayers, and desire the common people should understand them according to the common use of the words. I doubt not but this latter is the true case ; for by this practice many profitable ends are answer’d for the good of the church ; and this appears to me to be the grand view aim’d at in the whole scheme of Popery ; *By this craft they get their gain.*

I must under this head take particular notice of the *hyperdulia*, or extravagant worship, which the *Roman*

* Salmeron in 1 Tim. ii. dis. 8. p. 467.

† De beat. Sanct. l. i. c. 17.

Roman church pays to the *Virgin Mary*; and which cannot without the most open inconstitence be said to intend no more than asking her prayers.

In mere compassion to my auditory I must omit many instances in support of the charge I have advanc'd against the church of *Rome*; they are such blasphemous expressions, which truly pious Christians will scarce be able to bear the hearing; and yet 'twill be necessary to mention some: for otherwise we shall be told that the charge is false. The *Roman Breviaries*, the *Offices* of the blessed Virgin, and our *Lady's Psalter* will furnish us plentifully. These books, tho' loaded with blasphemies, are not prohibited, nor have they ever undergone any ecclesiastical censure; and therefore in all reason may be supposed to be allowed by the church. Our *Lady's Psalter* particularly is allow'd and approv'd, tho' 'tis no better than a vile burlesque of *David's* Psalms; the name of LORD being erased, and the name *Lady* being put in the room; so that the just flights of devotion used by the sweet singer of *Israel* to the great GOD, are here sacrilegiously apply'd to the *Virgin Mary*. 'Twas the notable performance of Cardinal *Bonaventure*, a *Franciscan* friar; it is printed at large in the fourth Tome of his Works under publick licence, (by the command of Pope *Sixtus V*, and the permission of superiors.) And for this and other his extraordinary piety, this blasphemous creature was afterwards canonized for a Saint.

The high titles the *Romish* church gives the *Virgin Mary* in their addresses are not to be born: I'll give you a specimen, for all which I have my vouchers. She is called the "mother of mercy; " queen of heaven; fountain of compassion; the " vein of pardon; the hope of the world; the " sure refuge of the distressed; the cause of all " creatures; the founder of all blessings; the au- " thor of salvation; sovereign light of the world;" and

and to finish the whole, she is address'd to as "the inexhaustible fountain of all good, and all perfect," or absolutely perfect. There are none of these titles can be applied to her with propriety; and most of them not without the highest blasphemy and idolatry: Particularly can the character of *all perfect*, and *inexhaustible fountain of all good* be applied to any being but God without horrid blasphemy? To address to any but God under this character is barefac'd idolatry: The invoking and venerating the Virgin *Mary* as such, is making an idol of her; but lest they should be thought to be wanting in any instance of respect to her, they tell us "that God has given her half his kingdom; and that no favours are granted here on earth, but what first pass thro' her holy hands; without her there is no pardon; 'tis she procures the expiation of our sins, and 'tis thro' her prayers our souls are cleansed;" * and another of their writers says, "'tis morally impossible that any who has a true devotion for this good Lady can be damned."†

Again; they expect help from the Virgin *Mary* by virtue of her authority in heaven: 'Twas originally a mad flight of *Bonaventure's*, "Oh Empress and our most kind Lady, by the authority of a mother command thy most beloved Son;" But it is to be found in the *Mass-Book*, printed at *Paris* 1634. I'll mention a passage or two out of prayers directed to this exalted *Lady*. "Oh mother of my God, be pleased to make me partaker of that faith, that devotion, that love and humility, that purity and holiness, with which thou thy self didst often communicate, *i. e.* receive the Eucharist."‡ Again, "We praise, we bless, we glorify, we give thee thanks, we

* L'Off. de la Sainte Vierge Marie, *Leige* 1681. p. 33.

† Mendos. Virid. l. 2. prob. 9.

‡ L'Ange Conduct. dans la devotion Chretienne, p. 58.

“ we love thee, with all our heart, with all our
 “ soul, with all our strength; we offer, give, con-
 “ secrate, sacrifice to thee this same heart; take
 “ it, possess it whole, purify it, enlighten it,
 “ sanctify it; that thou mayst live and reign in it
 “ now, and always and throughout all ages.”*

Once more; the frequency of their addressees to the Virgin *Mary* is an evidence of their undue respect to her. Their *Rosary*, which they pretend the Virgin *Mary* herself inspired, and deliver'd to St. *Dominic* about the year 1220; and which, one of them says, is a book that cannot be valued at its full worth, consists of an hundred and fifty *Ave Marias*, and fifteen *Pater Nosters*; so that here are ten addressees to the Virgin, to one directed to God; an equitable proportion beseem! Is not this exalting a creature above God? But no wonder at this, if it be the opinion of the *Romanists* in general, which St. *Bernardine* declares as his own, that the Virgin's reply to the Angel *Gabriel's* salutation; *Behold the handmaid of the LORD, be it unto me according to thy word*;† was so highly meritorious, “ that by that act she has
 “ done more for God, than God for her and all
 “ mankind; and that men may say to their comfort,
 “ that upon the Virgin's account God is more obli-
 “ ged to man, than they are to God.”‡ Oh horrid blasphemy! Monstrous impiety! This the language of a *Roman* Saint, venerated as such by the holy church; it should rather be abhorr'd as the language of a tongue set on fire by Hell.

I have been the larger on this head, as it is the turning point of the controversy; and I hope I have sufficiently show'd that the church of *Rome* does something more, than pray to Saints to pray for them. And yet they add, 5. That

* Ib. p. 185.

† Luke i. 38.

‡ Bernard. Senef. Serm. 61. art. 1. c. 11.

5. That what they do is really no more than desiring the prayers of fellow-saints on earth. § This plea is confuted by what has been just mentioned, upon supposition that the *Romish* church actually prays to Saints for their assistance. But we will wave that; and only say, that common sense will really point out a vast difference between the two cases mention'd. Besides; the council of *Trent* meant more: This is plain, because they found the reason of *praying to the Saints upon their reigning with CHRIST*; which would be downright nonsense, upon supposition that the regard paid to the Saints in heaven, was not something more than the regard due to Saints on earth; and the invoking the *former* was not widely different from asking a share in the prayers of the *latter*. The same council directs to invoke the Saints, *in the manner of supplicants*; which surely insinuates more than the bare asking a favour of a living friend, with whom we converse. When fellow-saints are removed out of the reach of civil conversation, they are no longer to be applied to for any favour; and it would be no greater an absurdity to fall down upon my knees here at *London*, and to pray to a living Saint at *York*; than to direct a prayer to a departed Saint, supposed to be in *Heaven*. Every one sees a manifest difference between bowing the knee in a civil salutation of a friend present with me; and the bowing down in a solemn prayer, and calling aloud to a fellow-saint, who neither hears nor sees me.

6. The church of *Rome* pleads antiquity for this practice. The council of *Trent* speaks of it as the usage of the *apostolic* and *catholic* church from the beginning of Christianity. * *Bellarmino* † and *Azorius* ‡ assert, it was approved by all the *Greek* and *Latin* fathers. In answer to this I would offer two things,

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1. That

§ Prof. of Cath. faith, p. 43. Vid. Bp. Condom. loc. cit.

* Sess. 25.

† De eccl. triumph. l. 1. c. 6.

‡ Inst. mor. T. 1. l. 9. c. 10.

1. That supposing what they assert be true; yet this will not prove the lawfulness or fitness of the practice. It proves no more, than that those fathers were of that opinion; but this does not infer an obligation upon us to be of the same mind. Our religion is to be learnt from the sacred Scriptures, and from no other authority. If the word of GOD appoints any religious worship, I am bound upon my allegiance to my LORD and MASTER to conform to it: If the word of GOD is silent as to any act of religion, all the fathers, councils and popes that ever were have no authority to bind my conscience; 'tis a bold invasion of the rights of JESUS CHRIST, the only lawgiver to his church; and in duty to him I am bound to bear my testimony against such unwarrantable usurpation. He has left no deputy, or vicar on earth, neither has he qualified any for so important a trust. But

2. I deny the truth of their assertion; and insist upon it, that they have not antiquity on their side. There are fathers, against fathers, councils against councils, popes against popes; and some of each sort against themselves: so that if we were to be guided by authority, we should be at a loss where to fix; and every one must be allow'd to chuse his own master. However, if antiquity be of any consequence in determining matters of religion, the earliest must be the best: and this is clearly against the church of *Rome* in the affair now before us.

Archbishop *Usher*, who had as accurate a knowledge of antiquity as most men, tells us, that “as
 “ to the first 400 years after CHRIST, for nine parts
 “ of that time, not one true testimony can be pro-
 “ duced out of any father *in favour of this doctrine*;
 “ but these kind of men (says he) have so inured
 “ their tongues to talk of ALL fathers and ALL
 “ writers, that they can hardly use any other form
 “ of speech; having told such tales as these so of-
 “ ten

“ often over, that at last they perswade themselves
 “ that they be very true in good earnest.” *

Cardinal Perron, Richlieu, and other learned writers amongst the *Romanists* own, that the invocation of Saints was not practis'd for the three first centuries: The Reason they assign is a very remarkable one, and what should for ever have kept that practice out of the Christian church; 'tis this, because praying to the Saints would have been too much like the pagan idolatry, and so have obstructed the spreading of the gospel, the heathen justifying themselves by this practice. And by the by, I verily believe that the superstitions and fopperies of Popery have done more prejudice to the Christian cause than all the open opposition made by Jews or Infidels.

The first symptoms of this worship did not appear till towards the end of the fourth century; it seems to spring out of the regard which the Christians at that time shew'd to the memory of the martyrs; they frequented their tombs and erected altars there, praying to G O D and engaging themselves to a strict imitation of the virtues and piety of the departed martyrs: But by degrees, as the church got into easier circumstances, men grew wanton and superstitious; and the regard they at first paid to G O D at the tombs of the martyrs, adoring him for the advantage of their examples, dwindled into praises and eulogiums of the Saints themselves. In these they used sone apostrophes and rhetorical addresses: from hence arose a superstitious regard to them, and at last it grew up to a direct invocation and adoring of them.†

It would be endless to multiply quotations out of the fathers, which I am furnished with; I shall entirely wave them, and only further add, that it does not appear that any publick prayers to Saints

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* Ans. to Jesuit's Challenge, p. 421, 434.

† Vid. Span. Chr. fac. p. 865.

were establish'd till *A. D.* 787 by the 2d council of *Nice*: and this council was condemn'd by another held at *Francofurt A. D.* 794: and the invocation of Saints was likewise condemn'd by a former council held at *Constantinople A. D.* 754, where no less than 338 bishops were present.* It is upon the whole plain, that this was no doctrine of the first and purest ages of Christianity; and by what authority it becomes a duty now, it concerns them to consider, who plead for the practice.

7. It is further pretended, that out of reverence to the divine Majesty, they apply to him by the Saints, and this argues great humility.

Thus in *St. Paul's* time, there was a set of men attempted to introduce into the church *Angel-worship* upon the same pretence of humility. The apostle condemns it, as an instance of humility, which God had not commanded nor did he expect: *Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, or, as it may be render'd, a volunteer in humility; pleasing himself in his humility, or affecting it.*† The pagan idolaters pleaded the same excuse for the worship of their inferior Gods; and said, “By these we go to the great God, as by officers we go to a King.” *St. Ambrose* refuted this plea in favour of *heathen* idolatry, and it will serve equally for a confutation of the *popish*. His words are to this effect, “Is any man so mad or unmindful of his salvation, as to give the king’s honour to an officer of his court? which if a man does, he is justly condemn’d as guilty of treason: and yet they think themselves not guilty, who give to a creature the honour due to God’s name, and forsaking God adore their fellow-servants, as tho’ any thing greater than that was reserved for God himself.” He goes on and shews the difference

* *Id.* 1319, & seq.

† *Col.* ii. 18. ΘΕΛΩΝ ΕΝ ΤΑΠΕΙΝΟΦΡΟΣΥΝΗ.

rence of the two cases; “ therefore (says he) we
 “ go to a king by his officers and nobles, because
 “ the king is but a man, and knows not of himself
 “ whom he may most fitly employ in the admini-
 “ stration of his affairs: his officers and courtiers
 “ must enquire the characters of men, and recom-
 “ mend to him; a king is not able to do all by him-
 “ self. But there is no need of one to recommend
 “ us to the favour of GOD; a devout mind is a suf-
 “ ficient recommendation to him, from whom no-
 “ thing can be concealed, and who knows the de-
 “ serts of all.”*

I can’t help remarking here, that one grand cause of errors both in faith and practice, is a pretending to be wise above what is written; and concluding what is fit to be settled in the matters of GOD, from what is usually done amongst men. ’Tis a foolish conceit, that GOD is *such an one as ourselves*, which disposes men to make alterations in the constitution and settlement of his kingdom, and boldly to invade his royal prerogative: GOD will surely sooner or later *reprove* those, who dare treat him in so free a manner.†

But when the church of *Rome* is got into this fit of modesty (for ’tis not her natural temper) let her be ask’d; Where is humility or reverence to the great GOD in pretending to dictate to him, or determine the fittest way of access to him, when he himself has directed a very different one? An earthly king would severely resent such saucy insolence; and would not treat the daring offender with that patience and forbearance, which the blessed GOD exercises towards men. It is well for us, that GOD is not altogether such an one as ourselves.----- I am sure the *Romish* church would give a much stronger evidence of her reverence to GOD, than ever yet she has given; if she would closely adhere to the de-

* Ambr. Comm. ad Rom. i.

† Psal. l. 21.

clarations of God's will, as they are recorded in the sacred Scriptures; and make that infallible book the only rule, whereby to regulate faith, and worship, and manner of life.

Having fully stated the *Romish* doctrine of invoking the Saints, and fairly consider'd all they have to say in support of such a practice;

II. I shall now produce some arguments against it, to show that it is not only *unprofitable*, but likewise *unlawful*.

I. We have no command of God for it. In all our disquisitions about religion we are to consider the blessed God, as the rector of the world, who has an unquestionable right to prescribe laws to his rational creatures: these laws, sufficiently notified, we are bound to obey. Accordingly God has reveal'd his mind to man in the sacred Scriptures, those standing oracles of our holy religion. Whatever institutions we meet with there as appointed by God, we are religiously to comply with; whatever else is appointed by others, if it have no foundation in the word of God, we are so far from being obliged to the practice of it, that in honour to God we ought to protest against it, as a bold usurpation of the divine authority.

In the case before us, the practice of the *Roman* church is altogether *voluntary*, without any direction of God, our adversaries themselves being judges; for they don't attempt the proof of it out of Scripture.

Now supposing that God, as the fountain of honour, may, consistently with his own dignity, make a grant of some sort of religious worship to Angels or eminent Saints, his favourite friends, dear to him; yet if he has not seen fit any where to make this grant, who dare give his glory to another? Who can answer to his Majesty the bold infringement of his prerogative? Can the invocation of
Saints

Saints be thought agreeable to God, when he has not given us the least intimation that it is so? If this was necessary or fit, is it not surprizing that when so many directions are given about prayer in the word of God, we should no where be taught this lesson? Especially when we are bid to pray for one another, and to ask the prayers of fellow-christians in our afflictions, is it not astonishing that we should not be directed to the Virgin *Mary*, or some other Saint of interest in the court of heaven, whose prayers the church of *Rome* tells us are very meritorious?-----But not one word in all the book of God looking this way. And can any one suppose that a matter of this consequence would have been omitted, if God had intended or expected any such thing! But there is neither command, nor example, nor promise to encourage the practice, nor threatening to those who neglect it, upon which to graft this doctrine, in the whole Bible.

Their own doctors bear testimony to this; *Bannes*, *Cotton*, *Bellarmino* and *Perron*: and this latter confessed to *Isaac Casaubon*, that he himself never prayed to Saints, but only as he went in procession.* He had the checks of conscience, that what he did was wrong, but yet he must save appearances, and do it to secure his credit with Men of that interest in which he was embark'd, parallel to the case of *Nathan*, *In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant*, &c.†

In a word, nothing must be allowed in God's worship, but what we have his warrant for; so that the very silence of scripture is enough to condemn the praying to Saints. But,

2. The scriptures are very strong against this worship. Our Saviour's answer to the devil, already mention'd, appropriates religious worship to God, and consequently excludes the Saints from any right

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* *Vid.* Andr. opusc. posthuma.

† 2 Kings v. 13.

or claim to prayer, which is a principal part of worship.

The worship of *Angels* is expressly forbid by the Apostle; and the christian converts, to whom he writes, are warned against being *beguiled* into the practice: * By parity of reason the worship of Saints must be condemned; the Saints cannot be supposed to have higher pretensions to this homage than the Angels, if they be allowed to have equal. An Angel reproved St. *John* for an attempt to worship him; *he fell at his feet to worship him*, (a common posture of *image-worshippers* in the *Romish* church,) *see thou do it not*, says the Angel, *I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of JESUS; worship GOD*: † He is the only adequate object of religious worship; the highest Angels and the most exalted Saints in the heavenly world, are but our fellow-servants; we all belong to one family and serve the same master; those *above*, indeed, in a higher station; we *below*, in the station assigned us for the present, but in expectation of advancement in GOD's due time.

The *doctrine of devils*, which the apostle tells *Timothy* of, ‡ as what would be taught in the apostacy of the latter times, I apprehend to be nothing else than this idolatrous worship of Saints in the *Romish* Church, borrow'd from the worship of *Dæmons* or inferior Gods in the Pagan world. A parallel might be drawn between the one and the other; ** but instead of that, I close this head with a passage of one of their own writers; “ Many Christians, says he, “ do for the most part transgress in a good thing, “ that they worship the Saints and Saintesses, no “ otherwise than they worship GOD himself; nor “ do I see in many things, wherein there is any “ difference between the opinion which they have “ of

* Col. ii. 18.

† Rev. xix. 20.

‡ 1 Tim. iv. 1.

** Vid. *Jos. Mede* of the apostacy of the latter times.

“ of their Saints, and that which the *Gentiles* maintain’d concerning their Gods.” *

3. This practice highly derogates from the honour of GOD. As GOD was the maker of all things, so ’tis his glory to have all his creatures depend upon him, and direct their eyes to him for the support of the several natures which he has given them, and for a supply of needful blessings. Praying to the Saints for a supply of our wants must certainly lessen our sense of dependance upon GOD, and obligation to him; and this infringes his honour.

It is an affront to GOD, as it is without his warrant or direction. And,

It is injurious to GOD, as it argues low and mean thoughts of his Majesty. It looks as if we did not esteem him that almighty, wise, and good being, which he really is. For did we firmly believe his infinite *wisdom*, we should scarce pretend to prescribe or settle the way of approach to him, and that different from his own appointment.----Were we thoroughly persuaded of his immense *goodness* and *compassion*, we should not desire such a number of advocates, as if GOD were almost inexorable.-----And were our minds properly impress’d with a sense of his *almighty power*, we should not run to Saints or Angels for their help; but have recourse to him, who is the LORD of angels and men, and can employ any of his creatures as instruments to compass his ends, and to promote the happiness of those who trust in him and pray to him.

4. It is highly injurious to *Jesus Christ*. And thus it is *partly*, as it defeats one grand end of his coming into the world, and setting up the gospel-kingdom in it, *viz.* to destroy *idolatry*, which in the strongest sense is the work of the devil. See 1st Epistle of *John*, and the chapter where the text is.

But

* Lud. Viv. in Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 8. c. 27.

But it is *principally* injurious to CHRIST's intercession. The *Papists* can't allow this; tho' every one may see, that having recourse to the prayers, the help and assistance of Saints must be an affront to that *one mediator between GOD and men, the man CHRIST JESUS*: it is an insinuation, that he is not thought sufficient to manage man's cause with GOD without the aid of assisting Saints or Angels. As the notion of two Gods is heresy against *natural* religion; so the doctrine of more mediators and intercessors than one, is heresy against the gospel. *There is one GOD, and one mediator between GOD and men, the man CHRIST JESUS, who gave himself a ransom for all.** Now is not applying to the Saints for their prayers and their help a barefaced opposition to this gospel doctrine, and an open injury to the blessed JESUS? but it seems these men are better acquainted with the mind of CHRIST than his own Apostles; or otherwise St. *John* was greatly mistaken, when he tells us; *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the righteous*: He should surely have said, we have many advocates: But this doctrine was not true in St. *John's* days, tho' the church of *Rome* has determined it now.

I presume mother church was in one of her fits of modesty, or in a penitential mood, when she appointed this worship of Saints: For besides the profit it brings in, which we do but hint at: I can imagine but two inducements she could have to institute so extraordinary a service; namely, *either*, the good mother was sensible of the abominations of her children; nor had reason to imagine they would mend their manners, when they had the benefit of her indulgences; and so concluded they would stand in need of all the prayers and all the merits she could scrape together for them: *Or else*,
being

* 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

being conscious how she had departed from the gospel of CHRIST, she concluded that she could not with any modesty apply to him, whom she had highly affronted, and therefore she directs her poor children to the patronage of others, whom for that purpose she had exalted to great honours.

According to the constitution of the gospel, we may as lawfully make to ourselves more Gods, as we may more mediators than one.

But to evade the force of this reasoning, the *Romish* church has framed a very subtle distinction between a mediator of *redemption*, and a mediator of *intercession*; the former, they say, belongs to CHRIST *solely*, the other the Angels and Saints in heaven are intitled to. But the scriptures give no countenance to such a distinction. They plainly teach us, that the intercession of CHRIST is founded upon the meritoriousness of his death and sufferings; his giving himself a *ransom* for us, and being the *propitiation* for our sins, claims for him, and supports the character of our *intercessor*. These are mutually dependent and closely connected. He is exalted to the right hand of GOD, as a reward of his sufferings, and there he sits to make intercession for us: Whoever therefore advance any to be assessors with CHRIST in this important work, they undervalue his merits, and rob him of his glory.

The close connexion of redemption and intercession our adversaries seem to be aware of; and therefore to solve the difficulty, *Bellarmino* says, the Saints are *mediators by participation*; but this is with the same propriety, as he elsewhere calls them *Gods by participation*. Accordingly the church of *Rome* makes no scruple in her publick prayers to beg GOD's pardon, mercy and favour on account of the merits of the Saints; and prays to them to obtain blessings by virtue of their merits: They depend upon the merits of the Saints, and put them-

themselves under their protection with the utmost satisfaction of mind, as if they were Gods. Bishop *Stillingfleet* to this purpose says, “ I have known
 “ myself intelligent persons of their church, who
 “ commit their souls to the Virgin *Mary*’s protection
 “ on every day, as we do to almighty GOD’S; and
 “ such who thought they understood the doctrine
 “ and practice of their church as well as others.” *
 In the celebration of the *Mass*, the priest says thus,
 “ We pray thee, oh LORD, by the *merits* of thy
 “ Saints (he kisses the altar) whose relicks are
 “ here, and of all thy Saints, that thou wouldst
 “ grant us the pardon of all our sins, Amen.” †
 Not a word of CHRIST in the prayer. But none
 of their doctors, that I know of, ever deny’d the
 merits of their Saints, and therefore we may dis-
 miss this head; for every one must see that by this
 practice great dishonour is done to CHRIST, as if
 he needed the assistance of the Saints, in order to
 the success of his intercession: Nay, some amongst
 them have carried the matter further, and have not
 scrupled to say, “ that the intercession of the
 “ Saints is sometimes *more available* than
 “ CHRIST’S.” ‡ And another says, “ he can-
 “ not tell which to prefer, the Mother’s milk,
 “ or the Son’s blood.” §

§. This invocation of Saints is highly absurd.
 For,

It does not appear that they have any knowledge of
 our affairs here on earth, or can hear our prayers.
 The Romanists prove they have, thus; It is said
 there is joy in the presence of GOD over one sinner
 that repenteth: ¶ And ’tis said the Saints shall be
 equal unto the Angels; ** therefore the Saints know
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* Of Idol. of the Church of Rome, p. 143.

† Miss. Rom. Ed. Paris, 1684.

‡ Vid. *Salmer.* ubi sup. cit. *Hen. Fitz-Simon* of the *Mass*, l. 2.

P. 2. c. 3.

§ *Car. Scriban.* in *Amphit. honor.*

¶ Luke xv. 10.

** c. xx. 36.

of the repentance of sinners, and by parity of reason, they know other things. But we shou'd remember that our likeness to Angels, as there mention'd, is to commence at the resurrection; and then I presume there will be no further room or need of prayers to the Saints. But if the inhabitants of heaven have any knowledge of our affairs, 'tis most likely to suppose they have it by revelation from God; and upon this supposition 'tis monstrously absurd to pray to them; for then it will be thus: First pray to a Saint, then God tells that Saint, who it is that prays, and what he prays for; then the Saint must go back to God and pray for such person, and for such a mercy desired. Can any thing be more absurd than this, to send God upon the errands of his creatures; or to suppose that to be done in heaven by God and his servants, which would be laugh'd at as a foolish and ridiculous farce, if acted between a king and his subjects, or a master and his servants on the stage of this world.

Again; if they could hear our prayers, 'twould be absurd to pray to them, because *they have no power or authority to intercede*. Those who pretend to imploy them in this service, should be able to produce their commission.

Further; Praying to them supposes, *that they are possess'd of divine perfections*, and so makes Gods of them. Particularly it supposes, that they are *omnipresent, omniscient, almighty, and all-sufficient*: These are incommunicable perfections of DEITY, and can't belong to any creature; and yet these must be supposed to be in the Saints, if all men, from all parts of the earth, and in all circumstances are to direct their prayers to them: I'll give a specimen of such a prayer; " My dear Angel St. *Michael*, all the Angels, my Patrons and Patronesses, Saints and Saintesses, whose feast is celebrated this day; come and keep me company,

“pany, and assist me in my necessities.”* Besides; the power of knowing the hearts of men is by consequence ascribed to the Saints by this practice of the church of *Rome*; nor can the charge be evaded, since the the council of *Trent* speaks of *mental* prayer as well as *vocal*. Mental prayers can come within the knowledge only of him, who searches the heart; which GOD claims as his peculiar prerogative, *I the LORD search the heart*; † nor will he give this glory to another.

Once more; this is absurd, because we may be sure, that the *Saints themselves will not admit this worship*. St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* with the greatest abhorrence rejected it, while they were on earth, as an abominable indignity to the great GOD: and I presume they have not less reverence for the divine Majesty now they are got to heaven. The *Romanists* use this sort of arguing to prove that the Saints in heaven pray for those below; because they did so when they themselves were on earth, and their charity is increased by their sight of GOD in heaven. ‡ And I suppose charity is not the only grace or virtue the Saints will be perfected in, when they are got to heaven: Their *charity* is not so perfected sure, as to destroy their other graces; it is not so improved, as to abate their reverence to GOD, or their zeal for the honour of their Saviour; their humility can't be turn'd into a proud aspiring to be equal with the son of GOD. It was part of their excellence, while on earth, to have humble thoughts of themselves, and an admiring sense of obligation to CHRIST their redeemer; they had learnt to account themselves but *unprofitable servants* to the great GOD; and when they had done their best, 'twas the humble language of their souls, *Not I, but the grace of GOD*

* L'Ange Conduct. &c. p. 1.

† Jer. xvii. 10.

‡ Prof. of Cath. Faith, p. 41.

GOD *that was with me.* And I presume they will not be less sensible of obligation to GOD, or of their own unworthiness, when they have reach'd heaven; they will then cast their crowns at the foot of GOD's throne, ascribing the glory of all his works both in the kingdom of providence and of grace to him, *Thou art worthy to receive all honour and glory and praise.** They, holy souls, have no notion of merit; and therefore know themselves not to be qualified to intercede for others.

I am inclin'd to think, that the *Romish* church was aware of this, and doubted whether truly pious Saints above would undertake to mediate men's concerns with GOD: And therefore to do them justice, they do not rigidly insist upon it, that the Saints they worship, should be such only as *pass'd the time of their sojourning in the fear of GOD*, truly good and pious souls; 'tis not necessary with them, that they should be strictly *Saints*, in the full sense of that word, or in the esteem of GOD; 'tis enough for their purpose if they are Saints of the Pope's making; and therefore no wonder that we meet with such a different variety of names in their calendar; every man may pick and chuse his patron, for there is choice enough.

Some few there are on the roll, whose praise is in the church of CHRIST; such as were great instruments of promoting the gospel, while here on earth; and these I doubt not shine now with a glory, like the sun in the kingdom of our Father above.

But others there are, who have left no remembrances of them, only such as must raise the just indignation of every pious mind: Men of most wicked and profligate lives, monsters in nature for cruelty, and of the most bloody dispositions. Witness here St. *Dominic*, whose memo-

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ry will ever be abhorr'd, for his having been the author and contriver of that cursed engine of persecution, the *Inquisition*: Witness likewise a Saint of our own country, the famous *Thomas à Becket*, who had no good quality belonging to his character; pride and treachery compos'd the man; he was a rebel to his king, and a traytor to his country; but being a bigot to the church, his sins were absolved, (*N.* zeal for the church will cover a multitude of sins!) and he was raised to the dignity of a *Romish* Saint; and became in a manner the idol of this part of the world for near 200 years: he perfectly eclips'd the glory of the other Saints for a while; nay, we are told, that whereas there were three altars in the cathedral church of *Canterbury*, one erected to the honour of CHRIST, another to the *Virgin Mary*, and a third to this *St. Thomas*; the offerings at his shrine came to about a 1000*l.* when those to the *Virgin* came not to 5*l.* and to CHRIST nothing at all. And a noted historian tells us, that in one year, *viz.* *A. D.* 1420, there were no less than 50,000 foreigners came in pilgrimages to pay their homage at this tomb.* Upon the whole, the church of *Rome* has no reason to fasten the charge of idolatry in the *heathen* world, on their worshipping evil Spirits; they can match the worst of them with some of their Saints.

Others of this sacred tribe could be thus advanced, one would think, for nothing but their folly. Their great *St. Francis*, according to their own accounts, may be justly suspected of wanting common sense. His throwing away his cloaths, and running about stark naked, was such a freak, that he ought either to have been whipp'd about the streets by way of punishment for his impudence, or have been confined for a madman. His
preaching

* *Rapin's Hist. of Eng.* V. 3. p. 48.

preaching to birds and beasts, and talking to them as fellow-creatures, was stupid and ridiculous.

Once more; There are other Saints on their list, who never had any real existence; no other being, but the imaginary one, which their own legends have given them: and their accounts of them are so romantick, that one would imagine they could not themselves believe there ever were such persons: witness their monstrous giant *St. Christopher*, who carried CHRIST cross an arm of the sea; *St. Longinus* the *Roman* soldier, who thrust the spear into CHRIST's body on the cross; *St. George*; *St. Ursula* with her 11000 virgins: and many others, whose names are preserved among the *Romish* Saints, though they never had a being amongst living men.

6. This worship of Saints is very imprudent. For supposing it be allowable, 'tis a round about way; which common prudence would forbid us to use, unless GOD himself had directed it. No prudent man would try twenty methods to effect a thing, which could as well or better be done one particular way. The sacred scripture tells us the direct way to the father is by *Jesus Christ: I am the way, the truth and the life*, says he of himself; nay he speaks it exclusively of all others, *no man cometh unto the father but by me* *. The great GOD has directed me to come to him by his Son, and has assured me of success in this way: Now though perhaps I may be vain enough to think, that it would be more humble and more respectful to go to GOD by the intercession of Angels or Saints; yet if I desired success, common prudence would teach me to take the way, which GOD has appointed.

Besides; supposing it to be a doubtful case, whether we should give religious worship to Saints or not; prudence would forbid my doing it, be-

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cause

* John xiv. 6.

cause it is safer not to do it. ----- If *Protestants* are in the right, the *Papists* are guilty of a most heinous sin, in giving GOD's glory to others: if *they* are in the right, then *we* are wanting in some respect, which we might have given to the Saints; but were not bound by any command of GOD to do it; for this is not pretended. If we are in the right, the church of *Rome* is exposed to the dreadful resentments of GOD for sinning against him: if we are not in the right, all we lose is the benefit we might receive by the prayers of Saints: but I apprehend we shall not feel the loss, if we can secure, (I pray GOD we all of us may!) an interest in the prevailing intercession of CHRIST our redeemer.

I close with remarking, that the *Romish* manner of making Saints is a great objection against worshipping them. This is done by the Pope, with a heap of ridiculous ceremonies, and for the sake usually of immense sums of money, given by princes who are desirous of the glory of procuring canonization for some favourite friend; * for you must know that these Saints generally are drawn up to Heaven by a cord of gold, and if it was not for the power of that metal, hundreds of them had never been supposed to be there. ----- But what horrid, insolent arrogance is this, for a sinful earthly man to pretend to make these petty Gods: If his *Holiness* had this power, the *Romanists* might with some sort of propriety stile him *our Lord God the Pope*; and need not deny, or be ashamed of it afterwards. Monstrous impiety, for a sinful creature to constitute himself the distributor of heavenly blessings! And this he effectually does by appointing the Saints, whose prayers and merits procure them, and by whose hands they are convey'd.

II. I

* V. Picart's Cerem. and rel. cust. Vol. I, p. 386.

II. I am now come to the II^d branch of my subject, which is the *worship of IMAGES*. I must be brief in my remarks upon this. Let us *first* enquire what the doctrine of the church of *Rome* is in relation to this matter, and then examine the reasons against it.

Their late book for the use of converts declares, that “ they do not think it unlawful to have the
“ Images of GOD the Father, and of the blessed
“ TRINITY; and they make no difficulty of paint-
“ ing GOD the Father, under the figure of a ve-
“ nerable old man”*. But I think the scripture is exceeding plain against this, and I take it to be absolutely unlawful to make any such representations of GOD: he is a spirit, and therefore cannot be likened to any thing that is corporeal. *To whom will you liken GOD? or what likeness will ye compare unto him †?* But the *Romanists* say, that they do not think such Images of GOD unlawful, “ provided they be not understood to bear any like-
“ nefs or resemblance of the divinity”‡: But for what end are Images designed, if not to represent the prototype?

But the Council of *Trent* has expressly authorized the making and use “ of Images of CHRIST and
“ of the Virgin *Mary*, and of other Saints, and
“ has appointed that they should be placed in
“ churches, and that due honour and veneration
“ be given to them”. The *Romish* doctors differ about the veneration due to Images; some say, they are to be worshipped *properly*, so as to terminate the worship on the very Images; others say, *analogically* or *improperly* so as to terminate the worship upon the prototype or original, whose Image it is. [I suppose these doctors will then allow that some worship is terminated on the Saints, not all on GOD.] Some argue for the *same*
X 2 *sort*

* Id. Ibid. p. 49.

† Isaiah xl. 18, &c.

‡ Isaiah xl. 18, &c.

sort of worship as is due to the original; others say an *inferior and different* one. Their doctors thus differing, the council has left it at large: though there is one clause, which blabs what they mean; their learned men may be acquainted with it, but it was not safe to trust it with the common people: they mean in truth to command every thing, which has been established by the decrees of councils, but especially of the 2d Council of *Nice*.* Now 'tis well known in the learned world that this Council of *Nice* expressly confirms the *adoration of Images*. They say thus, “ It is our
 “ opinion that the Images of the glorious Angels
 “ and Saints are to be *adored*: but if any man is
 “ not so minded, but doubts about the adoration
 “ of Images, him the Synod pronounces accursed”. Hence learn the sense of the fathers of *Trent*; and that this is the real opinion of the church of *Rome* may be inferr'd from the constant practice of her votaries.

Our adversaries say, they do not pray *to* the Images, but only *before* them; and that “ be-
 “ cause the sight of a good picture or Image helps
 “ to enkindle devotion in the heart”. How a devout frame of mind towards God should be rais'd by the sight of the Image of *St. Francis*, the picture of *St. Dominic*, or the shrine of *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, I am at a loss to conceive: and if any devotion be thus artificially raised, I imagine it cannot be of much account with that God who searches the heart, and requires truth in the inward parts. They would have us believe, that they pay no regard at all to the Image, but only *thro' that* to the original: This pretension is extremely confident. A naked representation of what they do with reference to the Images, will be a sufficient confutation of this bold evasion.

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The Images of Saints are in their churches; placed there by authority; the people fall down on their knees before them, or lie prostrate at their feet; they offer incense to them; they erect altars, and direct prayers to them; they make vows before them; and they kiss them. These are all acts of adoration, and their learned doctors will defend this devotion. These were the expressions of *Heathen* idolatry; and why they should not be interpreted so now, I know not. These actions plainly show that their regard is to the Image itself. Let me particularly mention the ceremony of *kissing* the Images. To *kiss* in a religious sense is to *adore*; thus idolaters were wont to kiss their gods. *Pliny* mentions the *kiss* as a sacred rite used in their adorations. The sacred scriptures also mention this*. *Cicero* tells us of a brazen statue of *Hercules*, that the chin and lips of it were worn off by those who did *adore* him: And I can tell you of a brazen statue of *St. Peter* in the great church of *Rome*, whose toes are worn off by those who *adore* him: And I am well assured by some ingenious gentlemen of unquestionable integrity, who have actually seen this famous Image; that it bears those marks of venerable antiquity, by which every one skill'd in that sort of learning knows it to have been a statue of *Jupiter* in Pagan *Rome*. The worship truly seems to me to be the same in Papal *Rome*; and therefore the Images may serve as well now as heretofore, only altering the names.†

That they have a regard to the images themselves does also appear from hence, that they ascribe miracles to them; they are stupid enough to think, that some images bleed, others weep; some give a gracious nod to the devotees in token of acceptance of their prayers and offerings, and are made to bend the body, or reach forth the hand towards

X 3

their

* 1 Kings xix. 18. Job xxxi. 27. and Hof. xiii. 2.

† V. Dr. Con. Middleton's Letter from *Rome*; a most curious and entertaining piece, printed *London*, 1729.

their deluded worshippers; they imagine there goes forth from them a power of healing; and they tell us, that by the touch of them diseases, otherwise incurable, have been and are removed; and as they have particular Saints for the cure of different disorders, so likewise have they several pictures and images of the same Saint, which have their different powers of performing mighty feats. I will mention one instance; I have it upon very good authority, and I suppose most of our *Italian* merchants know the truth of it.

Tho' there are in *Italy* many pictures and Images of the Virgin *Mary*; yet there is a picture of high renown, call'd *Madona di monte negro*: She belongs to a convent on the black mountain near *Livorne*; 'tis an ugly piece of daubing, (not greatly adapted to enkindle devotion, one would think) pretended to be found under ground by a shepherd, to whom it was reveal'd, that he should carry it to the place where it now resides, and that a church should be built there; which in process of time was done, with a handsome convent and a comfortable subsistence for a number of Monks: This *Madona* brings her masters great gain by the wonderful cures she works; she is peculiarly serviceable in epidemical distempers; upon which occasion she has been applied to for help, even by whole communities: Witness the city of *Livorne*; when such a distemper raged there, this *Lady*, at the intercession of the citizens, was brought down from the black mountain, attended by the several confraternities with great pomp; the citizens first giving a large security to return her safe, when she had stopp'd the infection; the *Great Duke* himself likewise became bound. She was placed on the high altar in the *Dome*, or great church, whither crowds of people flock'd to worship her. The mighty feat was after a time perform'd; and the *Lady* safely conducted home again, bringing back

a handsome gratuity to the Monks, who lent her: For the *Great Duke*, to shew his sense of obligation to the *Lady* for preserving his city, presented her with a crown of diamonds, valued at 30,000 crowns.

If all this does not suppose virtue to be lodged in the Image itself, and that regard is shewn to it, I know not what can.

A practice so absurd can never be thought to be appointed by God; nor should one imagine that reasonable creatures could ever be *beguil'd* into it.

The sacred scripture is full and express against every thing of this nature. The II^d commandment so strongly forbids it, that the *Papists* often leave it out of their common catechisms and manuals; and this before is done, lest serious people should, by discovering so plain a law of God against so constant a practice of the church, be frighten'd away from her. Disobedience to parents, murder, adultery, theft, &c. are no more a breach of *other* commandments, than bowing down to graven Images is a violation of the *second*; and by virtue of her dispensing power the *Romish* church may as well rob us of all as of one.

But I refer you to the sacred scriptures; your acquaintance with which will furnish you with passages enough, that condemn this worship as idolatrous.

Antiquity, which our adversaries are so fond of, is against them in this article: The primitive church, for the first four centuries, knew no such custom; the Christians then always objected it against the heathens; which no doubt they would have retorted, had there been room. So averse were many of the fathers against Images and Pictures, that they would not allow so much as making them at all; but this was carrying the matter too far. Some of the heathens themselves would not admit Images into their temples. The worship

of them was not established in the church till towards the end of the eighth century.*

As for the excuse which the *Romish* church pleads for herself, that many Protestants allow Images and pictures in their churches, they bow to the altar, and at the name of JESUS, (which, say they, is an Image or remembrance of our Saviour to the ear, as the crucifix is to the eye) that they erect churches, and keep holidays in memory of the Saints, and the like. The objection no way concerns us; and therefore 'tis fit to leave it for any to answer, who find their practice affected by it.

I close with a few remarks,

1. Let us thank GOD, that our lot is cast in a land, where we are not subjected to the absurdities and impositions of *Rome*. Time was, when this was the case with *England*, but GOD has deliver'd us. Let us shew our gratitude to GOD by doing all we can to support the Protestant government under which we live, against all the restless attempts of our enemies.

2. Let us closely adhere to the scriptures: We should take all our directions from that unerring guide; make it the rule of our faith, our worship, and our lives. And let us always bear our testimony against any additions made to it; or any thing in the worship of GOD appointed only by fallible men.

3. Let us possess our minds with a just abhorrence of Popery, and guard against it, as a religion, in many things, contrary to the gospel, and subversive of Christianity.

4. Let us pity and pray for our fellow-creatures, who are under the *Romish* yoke. Tho' we ought to detest many of the doctrines and practices of the church of *Rome*; yet we do not,

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* *Vid.* Spanh. Chr. Sac. p. 1306.

we dare not wish ill to any of their persons; the worst we wish them is conversion and forgiveness; and I am persuaded we shall all heartily concur in this address to God, in their behalf, with which I close my discourse: “ LORD have mercy upon
“ them, convince them of their mistakes, convert them from their errors, reform them from
“ their superstitions and idolatries, mend their
“ tempers and dispositions towards their fellow-
“ creatures, restrain their power, recover them
“ to thy pure worship, that they may receive the
“ truth as it is in JESUS, forgive their sins, and
“ save their souls. *Amen.*

The

*The sources of corrupting both Natural
and Revealed Religion, exemplified in
the Romish doctrine of PENANCE and
PILGRIMAGES.*

A

S E R M O N

PREACH'D AT

Salters-Hall, Feb. 27, 1734-5.

By JEREMIAH HUNT, D.D.

MARK VI. 12.

*And they went out, and preach'd that men
should repent.*

I. **T**HE design or view of the principles
both of natural and reveal'd religion is
to bring us to the steady and constant
practice of sincere piety and real virtue.
Under these are comprehended a due regulation of
the propensities we find in our make to pleasures of
sense,

sense, interest and honour; by the practice of sobriety, temperance, purity, moderation and humility: a proper government of the passions, and particularly of fear, by a rational courage, and a well-directed fortitude of mind; and of undue resentment and anger, by meekness and long-suffering: a uniform and steady care not to infringe any of the rights of others, of which a liberty to judge for ones self in matters of religion, which is unalienable, is not of the least importance: a sincere and undissembled love of mankind, attended with all the proper instances of goodness, whereby their miseries may be lessen'd, and their true happiness promoted: finally, a supreme love of the one true and living God, to whom all conceivable perfections belong, and whose goodness is diffus'd through all the works of his hands; a due fear and reverence of him; a careful and constant imitation of those perfections, which are capable of being transcribed by us into temper and life; a fervent and steady addressing our prayers and praises to him; a constant regard to him, by taking him into our view, especially when we form any important designs, referring all events to his disposal, submitting in every thing to his will, expressing ever an unshaken dependance upon him, and whenever we deviate in the least from any of his commands, returning without delay to our duty.

The steady and persevering practice of all these virtues is the great and ultimate design of the principles of truth, which reason, duly cultivated, without the assistance of revelation, is capable of discovering. And without such a practice, a profession of the clearest and most indisputable truths of natural religion, namely, the existence of God, the perfections which are to be ascribed to him, his providence, the difference of actions, and a future state, will be of no significancy to our true happiness.

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To the same end are revealed truths directed, as means, and motives; and without attaining that end are alike insignificant. Hence it is that the patriarchs, to whom God expressed particular and distinguish'd favours, are describ'd as *walking with God, pleasing him, and being righteous in their generation*. And on that account their worship and sacrifices were accepted, and for the failure thereof C^{ai}n and his offering were rejected.

When God set up a polity among the *Jews* to secure them from idolatry, and the vices which attended it, and for that purpose wisely injoin'd numerous rites; many of them paid such deference to the ritual and ceremonial laws, as to disregard the moral. To reclaim them God sent at several times prophets, who declared to them in his name, that their sacrifices and oblations, their washings and purifications, their feasts and solemn assemblies, their fasts and severest humiliations, were so far from being acceptable in his sight, if not accompanied with the practice of universal righteousness and charity; that on the contrary without those virtues, these very rites, tho' of his own institution, were the greatest abomination in his sight. * *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Then, tho' your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; tho' they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. And again: † Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleas'd with*
thousands

* Is. i. 11, 16, 17, 18.

† Mic. vi. 6, 7, 8.

thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

When the kingdom of the *Messiah* approach'd, *John*, his forerunner, was sent by God to preach and exhort his hearers to quit every course of vice, and ingage in the practice of every virtue, as the best preparatory to enter into that kingdom, in which eternal and immutable righteousness should be chiefly and ultimately recommended.

Jesus, the *Messiah*, appears, and calls those of his own nation to a change of heart and life; assures them, that their righteousness must be sincere and inward, exceeding that of the scribes and pharisees, or they should in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven; opens to them in the clearest and most extensive manner the duties of sincere piety, and real virtue; and tells them, that whosoever would hear and practise them, he would * *liken them to a wise man, who built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.* On the contrary, says he, *Every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them not, shall be likened to a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.* The same doctrine was taught by the apostles, who by him were equally appointed to be the foundation, upon which the Christian church was built, † *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.* ‡ *The grace of God, says St. Paul, that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appear'd, teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously,*

* Matt. vii. 24.—27.

† Eph. ii. 20.

‡ Tit. ii. 11.

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righteously, and godly in this present world. In this sense the phrase * *sound doctrine* is us'd, and the gospel is call'd † *The doctrine which is according to godliness*.

II. But the practice of sincere piety and extensive morality, becoming difficult, through the indulgence of irregular appetites, and inordinate affections, many (too many, God knows) in every age have contriv'd more easy ways, and endeavour'd to reconcile their criminal inclinations and conduct with the expectation of the favour of God, and of receiving rewards from him. Give me leave to call these *substitutes*; since they are put in the room of religious virtue, or real reformation and amendment. Now persons in power observing such bad dispositions in the populace, made the best use of them they could, to carry on their political views, and ambitious designs. In the most early times the characters of king and priest were united in one person, but afterwards those offices were placed in different hands. And then princes thought it proper, when their views of state made it necessary, to use the priests as tools to promote their designs; and the priests, by way of recompence for their services, gain'd unjust and exorbitant powers; while the people, who shar'd in the corruption, looked on with no small satisfaction. Thus the pure religion of nature became depraved. ‡ *Varro* therefore, a learned *Roman*, distinguished the mythic and political from the natural religion taught by the philosophers, who recommended virtue, and the imitation of deity, and on that account met with unkind and cruel treatment. *Socrates* for opposing established corruptions had a cup of poison put into his hand; which made *Plato*, his scholar,

* 1 Tim. i. 10. Tit. i. 9.

† 1 Tim. vi. 3.

‡ Vid. *Ang. De Civit. Dei*, l. 6. c. 5.

scholar, go into prudentials, and be upon the reserve.

The false prophets, who sprung up under the Mosaic institution, were led by the same corrupt principles. Thus we are told by the sacred historian, that * *The king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them: Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, consulting rather the inclination of the king than truth, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king. And Jehosaphat said: Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might enquire of him? And the king of Israel said unto Jehosaphat: There is yet one man (Micaiah the son of Imlah) by whom we may inquire of the Lord; but I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.* He however sent a messenger to him, who when he came to Micaiah, address'd him thus: *Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth; let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good.* And Micaiah said: *As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak.* Which accordingly the prophet did. And what was the consequence? Thus saith the king: *Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction, and with water of affliction, until I come in peace again.* And in like manner the prophet Isaiah: † *Now go, write it before them in a table, that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord; which say to the seers, see not; and to the prophets, prophesy not to us right things; speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.* A strong and lively description of the source of religious corruptions! Again: ‡ *I have seen also in the prophets*
of

* 1 Kings xxii. 6, &c.

† Is. xxx. 8, 9, 10.

‡ Jer. xxiii. 14, 16, 17. Jer. v. 31.

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of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies, they strengthen also the hands of evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedness. Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Hearken not unto the words of the prophets, that prophesy unto you, they make you vain. They say still unto them, who despise me, the Lord hath said ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one, that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, no evil shall come upon thee. By these passages, to which many others might be added of the same nature, we may see clearly, what gave rise under the dispensation of the law to the corrupting the religion of God, and by what principles this was effected.

Our Saviour cautions the people, who attended his instructions, to * beware of false prophets; and supposing their capacity of judging, lays down a rule to distinguish them. *They come in sheep's clothing, the drels of the antient prophets; but inwardly they are ravenous wolves, led on by the lusts of power and interest they are desirous of making a prey of you. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?* The same character of grievous wolves, Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, † gives of the false apostles, and judaizing teachers: to whom also Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, ‡ probably refers.

And since the representation of what the scripture says of these corrupters of Christianity, will afford us a clear and distinct view of the spring and motives of corrupting the religion of God, give me leave in a larger manner to attempt it. When the first professors of the Christian doctrine were exposed for the sake of it to many sufferings, occasion'd by the unbelieving Jews, the false apostles endeavour'd, as an expedient to save themselves from persecution, to mingle Judaism and Christianity

* Matt. vii. 15.

† Acts xx. 29, 30.

‡ 2 Pet. ii. 1.

nity together. * *As many, says St. Paul, as make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves, who are circumcised, keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.* That the expedient was effectual, appears from what he had said before: † *And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, then is the offence of the cross ceased.* To gain favour with the unbelieving Gentiles, these false and deceitful workers taught the Christians, that it was lawful to eat things sacrific'd to idols even in their temples. ‡ *I have a few things against thee [the church of Pergamos] because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols.* From the same intention of ingratiating themselves with the enemies of Christianity, they introduc'd worshipping of angels. ** *Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels; intruding into those things, which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up in his fleshly mind.* †† And from the same motive they denied the resurrection; and colour'd over this their error, by saying: *That ‡‡ the resurrection was past already.* And to strengthen farther their interest, they took the part, which all corrupters of true religion have ever done, and taught licentious doctrines; which is a method extremely pleasing to corrupt men, who dislike sincere piety, and extensive virtue. Such men * *will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, that want to be sooth'd, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth.* To gratifie these they taught, that fornication was lawful. †† *Thou*
Y
suffereſt

* Gal. vi. 12, 13.

† Gal. v. 11.

‡ Rev. ii. 24, 20.

** Col. ii. 18.

†† 1 Cor. xv.

‡‡ 2 Tim. ii. 18.

* 2 Tim. iv. 3.

2 Pet. ii. 18.

†† Rev. ii. 20.

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*suffereſt the woman Jezebel, who calleth herſelf a prophetess, to teach, and seduce my ſervants to commit fornication. * They crept into houſes, and led captive ſilly women laden with ſins, and led away with di- verſe luſts. Of theſe St. Jude ſays, † That there were certain men crept in unawares, turning the grace of God into laſciviousneſs, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Theſe corrupters of pure Chriſtianity were influenc'd by views of eaſe, intereſt, and ambition: ‡ teaching things, which they ought not, for filthy lucre's ſake: ** whoſe belly was their God, and who minded earthly things. Of theſe the apoſtle Paul ſpeaks, when he ſays: †† For ye ſuffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himſelf, if a man ſmite you on the face. They ſet up through pride and insolence for apoſtles, tho' they wanted the characters of ſuch. ‡‡ And thou haſt tried them, who ſay, they are apoſtles, and are not; and haſt found them liars. And when they wanted real piety, to cover their intereſted and ambitious deſigns, they put on ſpecious ſhews, and * transform'd themſelves into angels of light.*

From this representation of the Jewish falſe apoſtles, one would imagine there ſhould not ariſe any other, who ſhould outdo them in cunning craftineſs, and artifices of deceit. And yet the apoſtle Paul by a prophetic Spirit tells us, *that day* (namely, of the coming of our Lord) ſhould be preceded by an apoſtacy from the pure and ſimple doctrine of Chriſtianity, which was to proceed gradually, till united under one head, and †† *the man of ſin ſhould be revealed, the ſon of perdition; who oppoſeth, and exalteth himſelf above all that is call'd God, or that is worſhipped, that is, above all magiſtrates, who are call'd Gods, and even the imperial dignity; ſo that*

* 2 Tim. iii. 6.

** Phil. iii. 19.

* 2 Cor. xi. 14.

† v. 4.

†† 2 Cor. ii. 20.

†† 2 Theſ. ii. 3, 4, &c.

‡ Tit. i. 11.

‡‡ Rev. ii. 2.

that he as a God sitteth in the temple of God, under the pretence of being the head of the church, which is the prerogative of *Christ* alone; laying claim to exorbitant temporal power, contrary to the nature of *Christ's* kingdom, which is not of this world.

III. Having trac'd through the history of scripture the sources of corrupting true religion, and shewn that flattering the deprav'd taste of wicked men, who would reconcile criminal inclinations and vicious behaviour with the hope of divine favour and future happiness, from interested and ambitious views, has given rise to such corruptions: let us now see, whether the unscriptural doctrines (by which are meant, either the opinions, which appear contrary to scripture; or which have no scripture to found them upon, and are additions to it) which the church of *Rome* entertains, are not calculated to the same corrupt views.

Is it not apparent, that the undue claim the pope makes to be universal head of the Christian world, and successor to an apostle, must spring from interested and aspiring prospects? How does it flatter the ambition of a priest to have the people believe, that contrary to sense, reason and scripture, after he has pronounc'd the words of consecration, the bread and wine should be changed into the real body and blood of *Christ*, together with his soul and divinity? Is it not calculated to serve worldly designs, that the pope should issue out indulgences? What other views than interest, and heaping up a prodigious mass of wealth, could give rise to the fictitious doctrine of purgatory? Is it not with the same view, that voluntary oblations to shrines, as well as those which have been enjoin'd by way of penance, have been encouraged? Does it not flatter the vanity and pride of the priest, that in receiving

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the eucharist there is a sacred difference put between him and the laity, when the laity receive but in one kind? What church has furnish'd to corrupt men so many equivalents of real piety and virtue, with delusive assurances of pardon, as the church of *Rome*? May it not be justly said, that whatever claim they have to the character of a true church, they have all the marks of a corrupt one? When repentance, which signifies change of mind and conduct, is recommended, the papists think proper to use the expression of *doing penance*; that the votaries of their church may never lose the view of the power of the priest in absolving, and of an easier way of obtaining pardon by private fastings, saying *pater-nosters*, and *ave-maries*, than by real and extensive virtue.

But since it is proper more particularly to consider the popish doctrines of penance and pilgrimages, by which I mean here, what are enjoin'd by the priest: give me leave first to represent them to you; and then shew, that these are not built upon any firm or solid foundation, tho' they are admirably fitted to promote the corrupt views of that church.

1. The papists define penance to be “ A sacrament, consisting in some outward sign or ceremony, by which grace is given to the soul of the worthy receiver, instituted by Christ, when breathing upon his disciples he gave them the Holy Ghost, to remit and retain sins, that is, to reconcile the faithful fallen into sin after baptism. It differeth from baptism not only in the matter and form, but also because the minister of baptism is not a judge in that ordinance; whereas after baptism the sinner presents himself before the tribunal of the priest as guilty, to be set at liberty by his sentence. It is however as necessary as baptism. The form consists in the words,

“ *I*

“ *I do absolve thee.* Contrition, confession, and
 “ satisfaction are parts of penance, and the effect
 “ of it is reconciliation with God. Contrition is
 “ grief of mind for sin committed, with purpose
 “ to sin no more, and was ever necessary at all
 “ times; but in such, as sin after baptism, it is a
 “ preparation to remission of sins, being join’d
 “ with a purpose to do whatsoever else is requir’d
 “ for the lawful receiving of this sacrament. By
 “ penance the church hath ever understood, that
 “ Christ hath instituted the intire confession of sins,
 “ as necessary by the law of God, to those, who
 “ fall after baptism. For having instituted the
 “ priests, his vicars, for judges of all mortal sins;
 “ it is certain that they cannot exercise this judg-
 “ ment without knowledge of the cause; nor ob-
 “ serve equity in imposing punishment, if the sins
 “ be not particularly made known unto them, and
 “ not in general only. But when this is done, the
 “ priest, who hath authority delegate or ordinary
 “ over the penitent, remits his sins by a judicial
 “ act. And the greater priests reserve to them-
 “ selves some faults more grievous, as does the
 “ pope; and there is no doubt, but that every
 “ bishop may do it in his diocess: and this reser-
 “ vation is of force before God. It has been always
 “ observ’d in the church, that in the hour of death
 “ any priest may absolve any penitent from any
 “ sin. Satisfaction imposed by the priest” *viz.*
 of saying so many *pater-nosters* and *ave-maries*, of
 lacerating their bodies by severe scourgings, of
 going barefoot to the shrine of some saint, &c.
 which are too well known, to require an exact de-
 scription, “ are made necessary; since it is not con-
 “ venient, that the offender should be too easily re-
 “ ceived into grace; and it is proper he should be
 “ like to Christ, who suffering punishments, did
 “ satisfy for us, from whom our satisfactions also re-

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“ receive force, as offered by him to the Father, and
“ received by his intercession.” *

To this their doctrine of satisfactions it may not be improper to add, that the confessors often change severer penances into certain sums of money, which they exact; and teach, that attrition alone, which, as they define it, is a grief for sin arising either from shame, or from a fear of hell, will be sufficient for obtaining pardon. † A late popish writer farther tells us, that “ since under the law in
“ case of leprosy, to which sin may fitly enough
“ be compar’d, the leprous person was pronounced
“ clean by the priest; it is no way unreasonable,
“ that the Christian priest should have a power to
“ absolve.” To which he adds, that “ this doc-
“ trine is taught by our church,” and cites the following passage. “ Our Lord Jesus Christ, who
“ hath left power to his church to absolve all sin-
“ ners, who truly repent and believe in him, of
“ his great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and
“ by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee
“ from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, Son,
“ and of the Holy Ghost.

2. I proceed now to shew, that these doctrines of penance and pilgrimages are not built upon any firm and solid foundation; tho’ they are admirably fitted to promote the corrupt views of the church of *Rome*.

The main foundation, upon which the doctrine of penance is built, is the suppos’d authority, which Christ is imagin’d to invest the priests with in these texts: ‡ *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retain’d:*

* Vid. *Conc. Trid. Sess. dec. quartâ.*

† See *A profession of Catholick faith*, 1734.

‡ John. xx, 22.

*tain'd: * Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven: I shall endeavour therefore, with the utmost care I can, to give you the true meaning of these passages.*

As to the first, it will be necessary to enquire, who the persons are, to whom the text refers. They are call'd the *disciples*, † *who in the evening were assembled for fear of the Jews*. If by the term *disciples* we are to take in the hundred and twenty, ‡ this interpretation will not favour the popish doctrine; which restrains the power of retaining or remitting sins to the priests only; and denounces an *anathema* against such, who assert, that absolution is not a judicial, but a ministerial act, to declare the remission of sins to the believing penitent. But the words plainly refer to the apostles of whom alone it can be said with propriety, *as my father sent me, even so send I you*, or will send you in a little time, when the spirit shall be poured out. As a token of which *he ** breathed upon them, and saith unto them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost*. In the 24th verse it is said, that *Thomas, one of the twelve call'd Didymus, was not with them, when Jesus came*: and it follows, *the other disciples therefore*, that is, the rest of the apostles, *told him, that they had seen the Lord*. It appears then evident, that the privilege of remitting or retaining sins, mentioned in this text, relates to the apostles only; who were to be sent out by Christ himself, after they were furnished with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit for that purpose to preach every where the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins; and to whom was communicated the power of inflicting, or removing diseases. And I know not how any bishop or priest can lay claim to an authoritative power of remitting

Y 4

or

* Matt. xviii. 18.

‡ Acts i. 15.

† Joh. xx. 19.

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or retaining sins from this text, unless he can prove his succession to the apostolic character. Permit me then to show the scripture-characters of an apostle, whereby it will clearly appear, that the pretension, to be a proper successor to an apostle, is as groundless, as it is arrogant.

* *Am I not an apostle? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?* The apostles being chosen to be witnesses of the resurrection, it was requisite that St. Paul, being call'd to that office, should also see him risen. Hence Ananias speaks thus to him: † *The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest see the just one, and shouldest hear the words of his mouth; for thou shalt be his witness to all men, of what thou hast seen and heard.* Accordingly we find that Christ was seen of him: ‡ *And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.* This St. Paul says, as not having seen Christ, of whom he was to testify, till after his conversion, and our Lords ascension; as the rest of the apostles had. ** *And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.* On this account when the vacant apostleship of Judas was to be filled up, care was taken that it should be by one, who had accompanied with the disciples all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day, that he was taken up from them; because he was, by being chosen to be an apostle, ordain'd to be a witness of Christ's resurrection.

Another character of an apostle was, that from the abundance of extraordinary gifts imparted to him by the effusion of the Spirit, he was impower'd for the confirming and spreading the Gospel to communicate some degrees of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to others by imposition of hands. †† *Now when*

* 1 Cor. ix. 1.

† Acts xxii. 14.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 8.

** John xv. 27.

†† Acts viii. 14—17.

when the apostles, which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, two apostles; who when they were come down prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus) Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw, that through laying on of the apostles hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money.

It was peculiar to an apostle to inflict upon remarkable offenders, in the first settlement of the Kingdom of the Messiah, such extraordinary corporal punishments, as might be a terror to others, by the direction and influence of the Holy Ghost. Instances of this we have in the death inflicted by St. Peter on *Ananias* and *Saphira*: * in the blindness inflicted by St. Paul on *Elymas*, † and his delivery of *Hymeneus* and *Alexander* unto Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme. ‡

To the apostles was giving by the Spirit the word of ** wisdom; by which term in many places the whole scheme of the Christian doctrine is express'd. And therefore to them only, as design'd to be the foundation, on which the Christian faith, worship, and practice should be built, by the illumination of the Spirit, was imparted a full and comprehensive view of the dispensation of the Gospel. They by revelation opened, wherein the pardon of sin consisted, namely in removing the punishment, that was the reveal'd sanction of infringing the divine law, which was death, by a resurrection to eternal life; set in a clear and full light the terms, upon which this blessing would be confer'd, either by innocence, or since that does not appear to be attainable by us in this corrupt and deprav'd state, sincere
and

* Acts v. 10.
See 1 Cor. v. 5.

† Acts. xiii. 11.
** 1 Cor. xii. 8, 28.

‡ 1 Tim. i. 20.

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and steady (tho' not perfect and faultless) obedience; and at the same time assured us, that if these conditions were not complied with, a second death would be inflicted, and that Christ, who is appointed by the Father to be the judge of all, will ratify the doctrine of the apostles communicated to them by revelation, in dispensing rewards and punishments agreeable to it.

To bring this part of the argument to a point: Since the text under examination plainly refers to the apostles; and the characters laid down in the scripture of an apostle are such, that neither the Bishop of *Rome*, nor any other, can justly pretend to; it follows, that a grant made to the apostles cannot fairly and reasonably be claim'd by any bishop, or priest whatsoever; and that this text must be giving up, as insufficient, to support what is built upon it, *viz.* the authoritative power of a priest, as judge on a tribunal, to absolve.

But it may be there is greater force in the other text, which is brought to support the popish doctrine of penance * *Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* Let us therefore carefully consider it. And in order to this, give me leave to set before you a brief paraphrase of the preceding part of the chapter. The disciples at this time forming expectations of Christ's erecting a glorious kingdom upon earth, began to contest who should be greatest in that kingdom; till at last *Jesus* taking notice of the dispute, set a little child before them and said: There is a wide difference between the kingdom of God, and the kingdoms of this present world; men shall not there be exalted as they are here, by striving for superiority; but they shall be esteem'd only by their humility and freedom from ambitious
regards

* Mat. xviii. 18.

regards to the things of the world, such as are the qualities of this little child. Whosoever therefore shall come nearest to the unaffected humility of this little child, shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven; and he that without respect to temporal considerations shall receive and incourage such an humble person shall be rewarded, as if he had entertained me. On the contrary, he that shall despise, injure, or offend any of these humble persons, who believe in me; better were it for him, that he had quickly perished by some violent death. Such indeed is the state of things, and the wickedness of men, that offences will happen, and the providence of God for wise reasons may permit them. But woe be to that man, by whose fault they shall come to pass. It may perhaps be a difficult precept to men of some dispositions to avoid them: but if any thing as dear to them as a right hand or right eye be the occasion of injuring one of these little ones, it is much better to part with it, whatever difficulty may attend doing so, than incur the eternal displeasure of God. Take heed that ye despise not one of the meanest of my disciples, for whom God has so great a concern, as to send his angels from his own immediate presence to minister unto him: nay for whose salvation God has thought fit to have sent his son into the world, and whose recovery is pleasing to the father; as a shepherd has sensible joy, when he finds one of his sheep, which had gone astray. If therefore thy brother sin, or commit a trespass against thee; use all prudent means to recover him. First, tell him privately of his fault, between thee and him alone; and if he thereby be persuaded to amend, thou hast gain'd thy purpose, and saved thy brother. But if he reject thy private admonition, then take with thee two or three other persons; that by the authority of these witnesses he may be convinced, and prevail'd with to repent. But if this method also prove ineffectual to reform him,

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him, then tell thy case to the church; and if he still be so obstinate, as not to be influenced by public reproof, you have done your duty, and you may have no more to do with him in a way of friendship and familiarity. Verily I say unto you, * whatsoever injury or trespass, taking these prudent methods which I have laid down, ye shall bind on your offending and incorrigible brother on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever trespass ye shall loose on earth, by reducing the offender to repentance, in the use of the rules I have before prescribed, and entitling him, agreeably to my doctrine, to your forgiveness, shall be loosed in heaven. Upon this *Peter* ask'd, how oft his brother might sin against him, and he be obliged upon his repenting to forgive him. Now upon this interpretation, which appears agreeable to the whole of Christ's discourse here, what foundation is there for the authority of the priest alone to forgive; especially when there is not the least mention made of the priest in the whole paragraph?

Having thus overturn'd the foundation, upon which from scripture they build the doctrines of penance and injoin'd pilgrimages, the superstructures, as, that penance is a sacrament; and the exorbitant powers, which are supposed to be given to the priests, must of course fall, in the opinion of protestants, whose religion is scripture alone. But when the writers of the church of *Rome* from the purest antiquity shall produce testimonies to prove the doctrine of penance, as it is represented in the council of *Trent*, to be most antient, it will be no difficult task to make a reply. The argument which a late writer uses, taken from the priests pronouncing under the law the leprous person clean, is rather an illustration than a proof. However since it is borrowed from the law of *Moses*, which we gentile Christians were never under, and which is now abrogated,

* Vid. *Grot. in loc.*

brogated, it can never be regarded as conclusive. And whereas the same author says, that their doctrine is allowed by the church of *England*, I leave them to answer, who are more nearly concerned in it, than I am.

By what has been offer'd, I think it plainly appears, that the popish doctrines of penance and enjoin'd pilgrimages are not built upon any firm and solid foundation; however they are admirably fitted to promote corrupt views. What can more gratify the ambition of a priest, than to make his authoritative sentence necessary to the forgiving mortal sins. The words which I refer to are these: *

“ And tho' contrition be sometimes join'd with
 “ charity, and reconcileth a man to God before the
 “ receiving of the sacrament; yet this virtue can-
 “ not be ascribed to it, without purpose to receive
 “ the sacrament of penance.”

What could create a greater dependance of the people upon the pope, or bishop of a diocese, which suits exactly with ambitious aims; than that they should reserve to themselves some more grievous faults, and that this reservation should be of force before God? And since corrupt men, finding they want a settled habit of religious virtue, are desirous of something in the lieu of it, upon which they may form the hope of future happiness; what more readily occurs to such, than extraordinary appearances of devotion, severe scourgings, and pilgrimages to the shrine of some saint, and private fastings; which because not commanded, they apprehend will be sooner accepted, as equivalents of real and extensive virtue, which they see will put them to more difficulty to attain. But how delusive are such sentiments! It is the excellency of the Christian doctrine, that the institutions, which are enjoy'd in it, are few and simple; that they who profess it might with greater clearness see,
 that

* Vid. *Conc. Trid. ibid.*

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that the last design of it is to bring us to sincere piety and real virtue. And can any imagine, that introducing such unscriptural practices, as bad men may and do take as *substitutes*, and which are contrary to the wise and excellent simplicity of the Christian religion, can be pleasing and grateful to the author of it? Can we suppose, that a being of unlimited goodness can be pleas'd with the severe pains, that any of his reasonable creatures voluntarily inflict upon themselves, for their own sake? and if not, why are they undergone? The reason is plain: because the enduring them for a little time is much more easy, than a constant regulation of our appetites and passions, a steady practice of piety, and universal righteousness and beneficence; and yet these are necessary to make us like to God, who is invariably holy to render us subjects capable of future happiness, and to attemper us to heaven, which is to be considered by us as a state, as well as a place. How dangerous then must it be to lead sinners into a false and groundless expectation of the favour of God and eternal life upon expressions of grief, arising from shame and fear of hell, in the latest moments of life; when through long and inveterate habits of vice they are unqualified for the reception of those blessings.

IV. Let us therefore be prevail'd upon by this discourse, faithfully to endeavour by frequent and fixed meditation upon the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, and the celestial joys it sets before us, to gain an ascendant over the world, and be superior to interested and ambitious views. Let us take care that we do not raise positive duties above moral, which are of eternal and immutable obligation, and the end of true religion. And yet let us be careful to observe, whatever bears the stamp of divine authority. Let us not insolently make a religion for
God,

God, but receive it as he has delivered it to us by reason and revelation ; nor tamely take one from uninspired and infallible men. Whenever we are inquiring into the character of a true Christian, let us take the descriptions which are laid down by Christ and his apostles, such as : * *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (or fidelity) meekness, temperance, and the like.* Whenever any doctrine is propos'd to us, let us diligently consider it's tendency to promote true piety, humility, and virtue, or the contrary ; and remember that pure Christianity forbids all pretension to dominion over the faith of others, and is a doctrine according to godliness. Let us never desire to be entertain'd rather with smooth, than right things ; and especially let us carefully guard against every criminal bias ; that when a subtle priest comes, he may find nothing in us.

I shall conclude this discourse with two passages of scripture, the one taken out of the Old, the other from the New Testament. The first is : † *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, amend your ways, and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the lord, the temple of the Lord are these. For if you thoroughly amend your ways, and your doings ; if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour ; if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other Gods, to your hurt : then will I cause you to dwell in this place. Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other Gods, whom ye know not, and come and stand before me in this house, which is call'd by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these*

* Gal. v. 22.

† Jer. vii. 3,—10.

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*these abominations. The second is : * And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, charity. If ye do these things, ye shall never fall. For so an entrance shall be ministred unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

* 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, &c.

The

The Church of Rome's Doctrine and Practice with relation to the WORSHIP of GOD in an UNKNOWN TONGUE, examin'd.

I N A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D A T

Salters-Hall, March 6, 1734-5.

By J O S H U A B A Y E S.

I C O R. xiv. 9.

So likewise ye, except ye utter with the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

WH O E V E R reads this chapter with care, and without prejudice, cannot, I apprehend, but easily observe, that a principal design of the apostle therein is to shew, that the worship of God in the assemblies of Christians, ought to be performed in a language which all that join in it are acquainted
Z with;

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with; for he all along represents the use of an unknown tongue there, as contrary to the very end and design of such assemblies, and by several arguments shews, not only the impropriety, but the absurdity of it. And particularly in the words I have now read, he plainly asserts, that what is spoken by those who officiate therein, shou'd be known by such as are present; and therefore, that they ought to *utter with the tongue words easy to be understood*, and that otherwise they would *speak into the air*, and what they said would be utterly lost and unprofitable to those that heard them.

But since the days of the apostle some have risen up in the world, and those such as make the greatest pretensions to religion, even to that degree as to confine it to themselves, and to exclude all from the hope of salvation that are not of their church and communion, who are of a different opinion from his; I mean those of the church of *Rome*, who would have us believe, that it is better to have the worship of God performed in an unknown tongue, than in a language which the people are acquainted with.

It may seem strange, that any who profess a regard to God, and to the welfare of souls, should give into an opinion and practice so directly contrary to scripture and reason too. But when we consider in how many other instances they have depraved the worship of God, as well as the doctrines of Christianity, we need not so much wonder at this, or think it strange that they who have locked up the *scriptures* from the laity, and deny them the liberty of reading them in a language they understand, should, still the more to confirm them in their ignorance, appoint their *worship* to be in an unknown tongue too.

Whether they are in the right in insisting on this, or Protestants in being unwilling to submit to it, and in desiring to have their worship performed
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in a language which they are acquainted with, is what I am now to enquire into; and in order to determine this, I shall proceed in the following method.

I. I shall set before you what is the doctrine of the church of *Rome* concerning this matter.

II. I will endeavour to give you some account of what *St. Paul* has said concerning it in this chapter.

III. I shall consider what those of the church of *Rome* are wont to alledge in defence of their doctrine and practice. And,

IV. I shall then suggest some further reasons why we think it not only inexpedient, but unlawful, to use an unknown tongue in the worship of God.

I. I am to set before you, what is the doctrine of the church of *Rome* concerning this matter. And in order to this, I think it will be sufficient to refer you to what the *council of Trent* has decreed concerning it, for that is the present standard of their doctrine. Now therein it is declared, " That tho' the mass contains great instruction for God's faithful people, yet it seemed not expedient to the fathers, (*i. e.* of that council) that it should be celebrated every where in the vulgar tongue; wherefore retaining in all churches the ancient rite, (or in all places the ancient rite of every church) approved by the holy *Roman* church, the mother and mistress of all churches, lest Christ's sheep should hunger, and the children asking bread, none should be found to break it to them, the holy synod commands pastors and all that have care of souls, that during the cele-

“ bration of the mass, they should frequently by
 “ themselves, or others, expound some part of
 “ those things which are read in it; and among
 “ other things, let them expound the mystery of
 “ the most holy sacrifice, (or some mystery of this
 “ holy sacrifice) especially on Sundays and feasts.

And in the next canon they add, “ If any one
 “ shall say, that mass ought to be celebrated only in
 “ the vulgar tongue, let him be anathema.”*

Thus has the council of *Trent* decreed: but that we may have a clearer view of the state of this controversy between the church of *Rome* and us, it may be proper here to remark a few things, as particularly.

1. That they seem to confine it to *publick* worship, for they speak of the celebration of the mass; and some of their divines have said concerning *private* worship, “ That it is lawful for every one to
 “ offer his lesser prayers to God, in what tongue
 “ soever he pleases; and that all Catholicks are
 “ taught to say their private prayers in their mo-
 “ ther tongue.” Tho’ I see no reason why the one should be in an unknown tongue any more than the other, since we ought to act from the like principles, and for the same ends, and with a like frame and temper of mind in the one as the other. And I am apt to believe, that if this liberty be allowed, it is too seldom practised, and that it is no uncommon thing for those of their communion to say even their *private* prayers in *Latin*, tho’ they understand nothing of that language.

2. That by the *vulgar tongue* is meant the language that is commonly spoke in any country, and which therefore the inhabitants of it are universally acquainted with; as suppose *English* in *England*, *Dutch* in *Holland*, *French* in *France*, &c. In this sense it is that we affirm the worship of God ought to be in the *vulgar tongue*, i. e. in every country in
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* *Seff. 22. c. 8. 9.*

the language that is commonly used there, and so universally understood by the inhabitants of it. But this our adversaries deny, by appointing their mass to be in *Latin*, which is now a dead language, and is no where commonly spoken or generally understood in any part of the world.

3. I would further observe, that the council don't say it is absolutely *unlawful* that divine worship should be performed in the vulgar tongue, but only that it did not appear to them *expedient* it should be so; whereby they seem to have reserved to themselves a liberty of dispensing with this upon proper occasions; and perhaps they may have done so in some instances, and particularly in Protestant countries, the better to gain proselytes among them. But tho' they seem to speak with so much tenderness, yet at the same time they injoin the retaining what they call the "antient rite, approved by the "holy *Roman* church, the mother and mistress of "all churches," *i. e.* the *Latin* service; and instead of allowing the mass in the vulgar tongue, only appoint pastors or others, now and then to explain some parts of it to them; which shews that if at any time they have dispensed with it, and indulged the celebration of it in the vulgar tongue, it has been more from constraint than choice; and that it is their opinion and desire that it should always and every where be celebrated in *Latin*. Yea, so very intent were they upon establishing this, that tho' it was "earnestly desired, and strenuously "urged by the Emperor, the King of *France*, the "King of *Poland*, the Duke of *Bavaria*, &c. "that the publick service might be in a language "understood by those that heard it, they could "not prevail, but an *Anathema* is denounced against those that say the mass ought to be celebrated in the vulgar tongue."* And since that time, when some in *France* had published a trans-

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* Dr. Stratford's Necessity of Reformation, Part 2. ch. 3. p. 66.

lation of the Missal into *French*, Pope *Alexander* the 7th heavily complains of it, and in a Brief sent to the clergy of *France* on that occasion, “ stiles
 “ the authors of it, sons of perdition, and repre-
 “ sents it as a novelty which he abhorred and detest-
 “ ed as the seed-plot of disobedience, rashness, se-
 “ dition, and schism, and of many other evils;
 “ and therefore that *French* Missal, or what shall
 “ hereafter be published in any other manner, he
 “ condemns, reprobates and forbids.”* So that
 whatever compliance the state of their affairs may
 now and then put them upon, we see they are against
 translations; and I am afraid that if any of the
 common people should desire a Bible or a Prayer-
 Book in the vulgar tongue, in *Spain* or *Italy* or
Portugal, it would be enough to bring him under the
 suspicion of heresy. I shall only add under this
 head, That whereas the council says, “ That lest
 “ Christ’s sheep should hunger, and the children
 “ asking bread, none should be found to break it
 “ to them, therefore they command pastors and all
 “ that have care of souls, that during the celebra-
 “ tion of the mass they expound some part of those
 “ things that are read in it;” they herein plainly
 allow that it is fit the people should understand some-
 thing of what they are about, for otherwise why
 is any part of it ordered to be expounded to them?
 And yet in the provision that is made for this more
 zeal is shewn for their *Latin* service, than kind-
 ness and concern for them, who surely would be
 much more edified by having the instructions and
 prayers contained in it, in a language they under-
 stand, than they usually are by the expositions
 which their Priests give of them.

Thus we see what is the *doctrine* of the church
 of *Rome*, that they are against the use of the *vulgar*
 tongue in publick worship; and their *practice* is a-
 greeable

* Bulla Alex. VII, 1661.

greeable to it, for it is their custom in all places to celebrate their diſſine offices in the *Latin* tongue.

II. Let us now ſee what *St. Paul* has ſaid in this chapter, concerning the language which is to be uſed in chriſtian aſſemblies; and when we conſider this, I doubt not we ſhall eaſily diſcern, that he is ſo far from giving any countenance to our worſhipping God there in an *unknown* tongue, that he very plainly and expreſſly condemns it. That which gave occaſion to what he has delivered in this chapter, was the unbecoming behaviour of ſome in the church of *Corinth*, who being inſpired with the gift of tongues, were too apt to overvalue themſelves upon it, ſo that it became too uſual a practice among them to preach and pray and ſing pſalms in languages unknown to their auditory, without ever interpreting what they ſaid, into the vulgar tongue. This the apoſtle condemns as an unwarrantable practice, and the arguments he makes uſe of to this purpoſe are ſuch as fully ſhew, that the worſhip of God in Chriſtian aſſemblies, ought to be in a language, in which all that are preſent may join, and be profited by it. Particularly he ſhews,

In the firſt place, that the worſhip of God in an unknown tongue is contrary to one great *end* and *deſign* of worſhip, which is, the *edification* and advantage of thoſe that attend upon it. He lays it down as a general rule, *ver. 26.* That in publick aſſemblies all things ſhould *be done to edifying*, and thro' the greateſt part of the chapter he repreſents the inſtruction and advantage of the people, as what ſhould be the principal aim of thoſe who officiate in them. He exhorts indeed the *Corinthians* to *deſire ſpiritual gifts*, but rather that they might *prophesy*, or be able to interpret the ſcripture, *ver. 1.* And the reaſon of this he aſſigns, *ver. 2, 3, 4, 5.* For, ſays he, *he that ſpeaketh in an unknown tongue, ſpeaketh not unto men but unto God, for no man under-*

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*standeth him. But he that prophesieth, speaketh unto
mento edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He
that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself, but
he that prophesieth edifieth the church. I would that
ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied,
for greater is he that prophesieth, than he that speaketh
with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may
receive edifying. Where he all along goes upon this
reasonable supposition, that what is not understood,
can never edify, and consequently that speaking in
an unknown tongue must be altogether unprofitable,
because it is not understood by those that hear
it. And hence it is that he afterwards says, ver. 18,
19. I thank my God I speak with tongues more than
you all, yet in the church I had rather speak five words
with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach
others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown
tongue. From all which it plainly appears, that in
the opinion of the apostle, preaching or praying
in an unknown tongue, is by no means allowable in
Christian assemblies, because thereby one great end
of them is defeated, which is the *edification* of the
people.*

Again, he represents it as *absurd* in itself, for men
to speak to others in a language which they are un-
acquainted with, and which can be of no more use
to 'em, than if they were wholly silent. This he
illustrates by the similitude of a pipe or harp to
those that dance, when they give no distinction in
the sounds, and to a trumpet to those who are to
prepare for the battle, when it gives an uncertain
sound; in which case neither the one nor the other
knows how to act. *And, says he, v. 7, 8, 9. E-*
ven things without life, giving sound, whether pipe or
harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how
shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the
trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare
him-

himself to the battle? So likewise you, except ye utter with the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? And he goes on, v. 10, 11. There are, it may be, so many voices in the world, and none of them are without signification. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a Barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a Barbarian unto me. Now the plain design of all this is to shew, that as the end of speaking is to be understood, so where this end is not attained, it is all in vain, and to no purpose; and the prayers and praises that are uttered in a language which the people understand not, can be no better than speaking into the air, and abusing them with empty sounds, and must render both him that speaks, and them that hear, *Barbarians* to one another. And as this would be accounted absurd even in common conversation, much more must it be so in the worship of God.

Another argument which the apostle makes use of is, That all who attend in publick assemblies, ought to *join* in the worship which is performed there; but that this is render'd impracticable to those who are strangers to the language in which it is performed. This he urges, v. 15, 16. Having before directed those who were zealous of spiritual gifts, to seek that they might excel to the *edifying* of the church; and when they speak with an unknown tongue, to pray that they might *interpret*, because without this, *tho' the spirit prayed, the understanding would be unfruitful*, and what was spoken could not be understood by those that heard it; he adds, v. 15. *What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.* Where, tho' he does not forbid their praying or singing under a divine *afflatus*, yet he would have them to perform both, so that others might understand and join with them therein. And

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v. 16. he gives the reason of this: *Else, says he, when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks; seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?* Where he very plainly shews, that all who are present in Christian assemblies should be able to join in the worship performed there; but that they are rendred incapable of this when he who officiates therein, speaks in a language which they are ignorant of. And sure both these must be readily acknowledged by all that allow themselves to consider. If Christians have no concern in the worship which is performed in publick assemblies; if, when the Minister is employed in prayer, or in confession of sin, or in rendring praises and thanksgivings to God, the people are not at all obliged to join with him therein; to what purpose is it that they attend there? they may as well be absent from, as present in such assemblies. But if they ought to be there, and to bear a part in the worship performed in them, (which the apostle here plainly intimates, and our adversaries themselves do allow) how it is impossible they should discharge their duty, when the whole of the service is in a language they understand not; or, as the apostle expresseth it, *How shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? i. e.* How shall the body of the people (who are intended by such as occupy the room of the unlearned) declare their consent to, and concurrence in the prayers and praises that are offered to God, when they understand not what is said? And if for this reason the use of an unknown tongue was condemned in the church of *Corinth*, because the unlearned could not join in the prayers and praises that were pronounced in it, then for the same reason must it be condemned in the church of *Rome*, since the common people know as little of
their

their *Latin* service, as they did of inspired and un-interpreted prayers.

Again, the apostle shews, That their speaking in unknown tongues in Christian assemblies, was to *pervert the end for which the gift of tongues was afforded*. As this was a miraculous gift, so a principal end and design of it was (in common with other miracles) to confirm the truth of the gospel, and to persuade men to embrace the doctrine of it. But tho' it was necessary to spread Christianity in the world, yet there was no occasion for the use of it among those who were already converted to the Christian faith. This is insisted on, v. 21, 22. *In the law, (or the Old Testament) says he, it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people, and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord*; which by some is interpreted as referring to the obstinacy of many who persisted in their unbelief, tho' such as preached the gospel to them, had the gift of speaking in languages they had never learn'd, from whence they might be assured they had them by divine inspiration, and therefore that the doctrine they delivered was of God. And hereupon he adds, *Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not; but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe*. Wherein he shews, that they were of no use in Christian assemblies, and among those who had embraced the Christian faith, and wanted only to be further instructed and established therein; but that it was *prophesying*, or speaking in their own language, that was more proper for *them*. And if, upon this account, the apostle forbids the use of such inspired languages in their stated assemblies, his reasoning will be equally strong against the use of the *Latin* tongue in divine worship now; for as *that* can have no pretence to be a sign to them

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that believe not, since it is not received by inspiration, but acquired in the use of means; so neither is it suited to the edification of them that believe, since it is not generally understood by them. Yea further,

The apostle represents their using an unknown tongue in their religious assemblies, as what had a tendency to *expose* them and their worship to the contempt and ridicule of unbelievers, who might happen to come in among them, and so confirm them in their infidelity. Whereas, on the other hand, when those who minister, instead of speaking in an unknown tongue, plainly interpret scripture, and speak of the great truths of Christianity in a language intelligible and proper, a heathen or unlearned person coming in would probably be convinced, and become a convert to it. This argument the apostle urges, *v. 23. If therefore, says he, the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say you are mad?* Whereby he intimates that they would have just reason to think so; for to what purpose do men speak in such assemblies, if it is not with a design to be understood; or with what advantage can others attend upon them, if they understand not what is spoken? When men are met together for the worship of God, and a stranger comes in among them to observe what they are doing, who hearing only an empty sound of unintelligible words which he can make nothing of; and upon inquiry of those who by their postures and gestures seem to be very devout in it, should find, that neither do they understand any thing of what is said; would he not hereupon be tempted to look upon them rather as a company of men out of their wits, than as a worshipping assembly? And if, at that time, the speaking with tongues in Christian assemblies, which were not understood

understood by the people, was in the apostle's opinion a reproach upon religion, and tended to prejudice men against it; may not this with equal reason be said of the *Romish Latin Service*, which is no more understood by the generality of those that join in it, than those were then? But, as he goes on, *ver. 24, 25. If all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or is unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.* When they that minister in holy things speak in a language understood by all, and in a manner becoming the solemnity and importance of what they are about; this is a proper means of keeping up the credit of religion, and of persuading men to embrace it.

I shall only add in the last place, That to give the greater force to all that he had said, the apostle assures us in the close of his discourse on this subject, *That the things which he had written, to the Corinthians, were the commandments of the Lord;* and that no true prophet, or any one really inspired, durst deny it. He sharply rebukes those Christians for the disorder and confusion they had brought into Christian assemblies, *ver. 36.* and then adds, *ver. 37. If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you, are the commandments of the Lord.* And sure this is a consideration that should silence all objections, and be of greater weight and authority with us than the council of *Trent's* decree. But,

III. I proceed to consider what those of the church of *Rome* are wont to alledge in defence of their *doctrine* and *practice*. And here I shall first take notice of what they urge to evade the force of the apostle's reasoning in this chapter, and from whence

whence they would shew that it does not conclude against them. And then I shall consider some further pleas they make use of to support their unreasonable practice of celebrating the worship of God, in a language which is not understood by the common people.

There are several things which they urge to evade the force of the apostle's reasoning in this chapter, the chief of which are drawn from an imagined *difference* in the case which he refers to, from what it is now. Of this they endeavour to produce several instances, from whence they would infer, that what he says, does not affect them.

They pretend, "That the apostle does not speak of their stated assemblies for publick worship, but of some more private conferences, or spiritual exercises, in which they were wont to edify one another when the publick worship was over."

But in answer to this: Tho' it should be allowed that such exercises were in use among them, and that the apostle might have some regard to them; yet that he speaks *only* of these, is so far from being true, that I think the contrary must be evident to any one that reads his discourse without prejudice; for it is plain from *ver.* 23, and 28. that he speaks of such exercises as were performed in the publick assembly, and *when the whole church was come together into one place*. Besides, if in such lesser assemblies they were to use a language which was understood by all present, and not to speak in an unknown tongue, unless there were some to interpret, then certainly they must be equally obliged to do this, when they were met together in more publick and solemn assemblies; and the reason which the apostle assigns for it, that *all things should be done to edifying*, must be as strong, yea stronger in this case than in the other.

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They further pretend, “ That the apostle in this chapter only forbids the use of such languages in the worship of God, as were *miraculous* and inspired, and understood by none present, any more than *Persic* or *Arabic* would be by us now; but that he does not speak of those that are acquired by study, and are commonly understood by some in all places.” This is an argument much insisted on by many of their writers; but as it is precariously said, and without any proof, so the weakness of it will easily appear, if we consider,

That tho’ it’s true he speaks of such languages as were *miraculous*, and which they had the gift of by inspiration, yet he does not condemn the use of them, because they were *miraculous*, but because they were *unknown*, and not understood by those that attended there; by which means he that spoke, did but speak into the *air*, and was a *Barbarian* to them; what he said was altogether unprofitable; and they could not say *amen* to his prayer or blessing. And if this was the reason why he forbids the use of them, as it appears to be from the whole scope of his discourse, then his prohibition must be understood as extending to any other language, which tho’ it be acquired, yet is unknown to the generality of those who make up Christian assemblies. Besides,

Tho’ the *Latin* tongue be more known now, than those languages might be which were then spoken by inspiration, yet it is no where a *living* language, or generally understood by the inhabitants of any country, no not at *Rome* itself; and therefore to the greatest part of mankind it must be an unknown tongue, and as such the use of it in the publick worship of God, is condemned by the apostle in this chapter. “ They would indeed persuade us, that the apostle speaks only of barbarous tongues and such as were wholly unknown

“ known to them that heard them, but not of
 “ those which were understood by learned and ci-
 “ vil people in every great city, as *Latin* is.”
 But thus to explain the apostle, is in reality to con-
 tradict him; for it is evident from the whole tenor
 of his discourse, that he would have divine wor-
 ship performed in a language which is understood
 by the *unlearned* as well as the *learned*, and by the
 meanest as well as the more polite in every place;
 and particularly from *ver. 16.* where he says, *Else*
when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that
occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen to thy
giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou
sayest. I know that by him that *occupieth the room of*
the unlearned, they would understand one that
supplied the place, and was to answer in the *stead*
 of those that were unlearned. But besides that
 there was no such custom at that time, and that
 every one was to say *amen* for himself, this sense
 of the expression is so contrary to the plain mean-
 ing of the original words, that *Bellarmino* himself
 rejects it, and says, “ That they don’t signify one
 “ that acts for, or instead of the idiot and unlearn-
 “ ed, but one that sits in the place of such, and
 “ is himself unlearned.” And as the sense which
 they would put upon the apostle’s design in this
 chapter, is very *unjust*, so methinks it is very *un-*
charitable too, since it excludes the far greatest
 part of those who usually make up Christian assem-
 blies from joining in the worship performed in
 them. If it be of no use to understand what is said
 in the duties of divine worship, why are they not
 performed in a language unknown to the learned
 as well as the unlearned, why not in *Persic* or *Ara-*
bic as well as *Latin*? But if it be of use, as unques-
 tionably it is, what right have the learned to it a-
 bove the unlearned, and why may not these insist
 upon it as their privilege, as well as the other? If
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the unlearned are obliged to worship God as well as the learned, then sure it would be much more charitable to have their prayers in the vulgar tongue which both are acquainted with, than in *Latin*, which is understood only by a few.

Another pretence whereby they would evade the force of the apostle's reasoning in this chapter, is drawn from the different case of Christians now, from what it was at that time, from whence they would infer, That tho' *then* it might be proper to have their publick services in a known tongue, yet there is not the like occasion for it *now*. They would have it that the rules which the apostle here lays down, were only temporary and such as suited the condition of the church at that time, but that the state of the church being since altered, they are now no longer to be observed. And if we inquire wherein the difference lies between those days and the present, they tell us, that Christians then were weak in the faith, and very ignorant of the principles of Christianity, and therefore they stood in need of being instructed and edified, and to that end it was proper that the offices of religion should be performed in a language which they understood; but that now they are so well instructed in religion, and established in the faith, that they have no need of further instruction and edification. This is alledged by several of their writers, and particularly by *Harding* the Jesuit in his controversy with Bishop *Jewel*.* Sure it is a sign they are put to very hard shifts, when they can use such an argument as this to support their cause. When we compare the primitive Christians with those of after-ages, or at the present day, I am apt to believe we shall all be ready to conclude, that the preference, both in point of knowledge and faith ought to be given to the former; and I think we have very good reason for it, since we find the

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* Art. 3. Sect. 30.

apostle in all his epistles giving so great commendations of them, and particularly giving thanks to God on the behalf of the Christians of *Corinth*, for the grace of God which was given them by Jesus Christ, that in every thing they were enriched by him in all utterance and in all knowledge, so that they came behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Now this being the character of those Christians, I think we may appeal to the divines of the *Romish* church themselves, whether they can pretend that those of their communion do excel or even equal the Christians in the apostle's days. Perhaps in some sort they may seem to do so in point of *faith*; for being taught to believe as the church believes, and to receive all her doctrines and decisions implicitly, without ever inquiring into the grounds and reasons of them, when they are once brought to this, they may stand in little need of any further improvement. But if they were to be inquired into as to their *knowledge* in the doctrines of Christianity, I fear it would soon appear that they have made no such progress therein, as to be above the need of further instruction. And if the fact upon which they found the difference between the primitive Christians, and those in their communion, be not true, then the inference they would draw from it must be wrong. And indeed, I doubt not it will hold much stronger the other way, and that we may with much better reason conclude, That since the apostle thought a known tongue in the worship of God was necessary for the Christians of that age, it must be much more so in our day.

Besides this plea which they make use of supposes or allows, that where Christians are weak in faith, and but of little knowledge in religion, (which they would have to be the case of Christians in the apostle's days) it is fit they should have

* Chap. i. 4, 5, 7.

have the offices of religion in a language they understand; which is in effect to give up the cause, since in all places there are some such to be found; and yet even this is contrary to their ordinary practice, and what they don't allow in any country, no not among the *Indians* themselves.

Again, they urge as a further instance of the difference between those prayers and praises which the apostle speaks of in this chapter, and those which are contained in their liturgy, "That the principal end of the former was the instruction and edification of the people, which end could not be attained, unless they were spoken in a known tongue, or afterwards interpreted; but that the chief end of divine offices is not the instruction and consolation of the people, but the worship of God." Thus *Bellarmino* says,* and the *Rhemists* to the same purpose, "That prayers are not made to teach, make learned, or increase knowledge, tho' by occasion they sometimes instruct; but their special use is, to offer up our hearts, desires, and wants to God."†

But the answer to this is easy and obvious, that what they assert is not true in itself, and therefore what they would infer from it, must fall to the ground. They affirm that the *principal* end of those religious exercises which the apostle speaks of, was the instruction and consolation of the people. But this is said without any proof, and contrary to the nature and design of all religious assemblies, the principal end of which is to worship God, or to pay their homage and service to him. And if this be the chief end of all such assemblies, why should it not be allowed to be so of those which are referred to in this chapter? Again, when they say, That the principal end of divine offices is not the instruction and consolation

* De verbo, L. 2. c. 16.

† Annot. on 1 Cor. xiv. p. 545.

of the people, but the worship of God; they seem to insinuate, that the instruction and consolation of the people is no end at all of them, or so very inconsiderable, that it need not be intended; to assert which is contrary both to scripture and reason too. Thus in this argument they oppose those ends to each other, which are not only very consistent, but ought never to be separated. No doubt but the worship of God, and our paying our homage to him, is the first and principal end of all the institutions of religion, and what should be chiefly aimed at in all our attendances upon them; but then the instruction and edification of the people is a *secondary* and subordinate end of them, and to which a regard is always to be had in the use of them, as the apostle expressly shews throughout the whole of this chapter; and therefore unless it could be proved that either the instruction of the people is no end of divine offices, or that the worship is compleat, tho' that end be not regarded or attained, the argument is of no force; for if it be an end, and the service defective where that end is not pursued, then its being only a subordinate, and the other the principal end, will by no means justify the use of an unknown tongue, which must render it altogether unedifying to them.

Thus I have considered the principal of those pleas which the popish writers are wont to urge to evade the force of the apostle's arguments in this chapter, for the use of a *known* tongue in the publick worship of God; and, upon the whole, I hope it appears, that notwithstanding what they have to say, he was so far from countenancing the doctrine and practice of the Church of *Rome*, that he expressly condemns it. But before I dismiss this head, there is one thing more which I must not omit to take notice of, which is, that finding themselves pressed with the strength of his reasoning, they have found out a short way of answering him, and that is, by opposing

opposing the authority of their church to his authority, yea to that of God himself. *St. Paul* has said, *v. 37.* that the things which he had written, were *the commandments of the Lord*; but, say they, “The church does not at all offend in departing from this institution of *St. Paul*, it being left free to the church, not only to violate this institution of *St. Paul*, but also the institutions of God himself, supposing them to have been once profitable to the church, but now unprofitable.” This is expressly said by one of their authors; * and this argument of the church’s authority is largely insisted on by *Dr. Cole*, at a disputation held before the lords at *Westminster*, in the beginning of *Q. Elizabeth’s* reign. † And if they were able to make good their claim to this exorbitant power and authority, I own this would be a full answer, and we should be obliged to submit to them, not only in this, but in every other instance wherein they have corrupted the worship of God. But if it appears that the church has no such power as this, I hope we may still abide by what the apostle has said, not merely as his own opinion, but as the mind of our Lord Jesus. We are assured of *his* commission and inspiration, but we have no such evidence of the authority and infallibility of the *Pope and his Council*, as to oblige us to submit to their decisions, especially when they are directly contrary to those of our blessed Saviour and his apostles; but the weakness of the church’s pretence to any such authority has been so fully shewn in a former discourse in this place, that there can be no need for me to insist upon it. ‡

I now proceed to consider some further arguments which they urge in defence of their *Latin*
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service:

* Hoffmest. in *1 Cor.* xiv. p. 272.

† See Collection of Records, at the end of *Bishop Burnet’s History of the Reformation*, No. 4.

‡ *Mr. Smyth’s* Sermon,

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service: And here I chuse to take notice of those which I find in a *Catechism* that has been lately published, and is cautiously distributed to such as they would draw into their communion; and which therefore we may suppose contains such reasons for it as they chiefly rely upon, or which they think will be most likely to impress the minds of those they deal with. Therein this question is proposed, “Why do the church celebrate the mass in *Latin*, which the people, for the most part, does not understand?” And to this they have four things to answer.

First, Because “it is the ancient language of the church, used in the public liturgy in all ages, in the Western parts of the world.” To which I answer,

That if it was used in the *Western*, it was otherwise in the *Eastern* parts of the world, for there the *Greek* language was used, as being commonly understood; and even at this day where there are, in those parts, any churches remaining, who profess the Christian religion, they have their publick worship in their own language, as is owned by some of the Popish writers, and particularly concerning the *Armenians*, *Ethiopians*, *Russians*, and others. Again,

It does not appear, that even in all the Western parts of the world, their publick offices have in all ages been in the *Latin* tongue; for tho’ it might be so in the earlier ages of the church, yet in later times it has been otherwise; and particularly we are assured that in the 9th century the *Bohemians* had their publick service in the *Sclavonian* tongue, which was the common language of their country, and that by the allowance of the *Pope* himself; and that this continued for some ages. *

But tho’ it should be allowed that the *Latin* tongue has been generally used in their publick liturgy

* *Aeneas Sylvius Hist. Bohem. c. 13.*

turgy in the *Western* parts of the world, it will not from thence follow that it should always be retained and insisted on. I own that it was for some ages used there, as the *Greek* was in the *Eastern*; but then it was when that language was in common use in those places, and generally understood by the inhabitants of them. *Origen* says, "That the *Grecians* in their prayers use the *Greek*, and the *Romans* the *Latin* tongue; and so every one according to his language, prayeth to God and praiseth him as he is able." * And *Bellarmino* himself grants, "That not only in the times of the apostles, all the people were wont to answer in divine offices, (and therefore must understand the language in which they were performed) but that the same was a long time after observed both in the *Eastern* and *Western* church, as is evident from *Chrysostom*, *Jerom*, &c." But their being in *Latin* then, when that language was common, is no good reason why they should continue to be so, when it is become a *dead* language, and understood by very few in any country, as it has now been for many ages. Whatever prescription it may plead, yet being now an unknown tongue, and the generality of men, by being obliged to the use of it, rendered incapable of worshipping God with understanding; sure it is highly fit it should be laid aside. But this is a favour which the church of *Rome* is very unwilling to grant, for tho' (as I hinted before) it had been allowed to the *Bohemians* by Pope *John* the VIIIth; yet two hundred years after, *Gregory* the VIIth wrote to *Uratislaus* of *Bohemia*, that he could not permit the celebration of divine offices in the *Slavonian* tongue; and he commanded that prince to oppose the people therein with all his forces. † Upon which arch-bishop

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Tillotson

* *Lib. contra Celsum*, p. 402.

† *Brent's Translation of F. Paul's Hist. of the Council of Trent*, p. 540.

Tillotson justly remarks, “ It seems he thought it a
 “ cause worth fighting for, and that it were better
 “ the people should be killed, than suffered to un-
 “ derstand their prayers.”

A 2d, reason why their mass is in *Latin*, tho’ the
 most part of the people don’t understand it, is,
 “ For a greater uniformity in the public worship,
 “ that so a Christian in whatsoever country he
 “ chances to be, may still find the liturgy perform-
 “ ed in such a manner, and in the same language to
 “ which he is accustomed at home.” To this I
 reply,

That I see not of what great importance it is
 that an exact *uniformity* in the public worship of
 God should be observed in all countries; but sup-
 pose that it may be duly and acceptably performed,
 tho’ somewhat different rites and customs should be
 used in different places. And this the church of
Rome itself allows; for in the 4th general council
 of *Lateran* it is decreed, “ That because in most
 “ parts within the same city and diocese, people of
 “ divers languages are mixed, having with one
 “ faith divers rites and customs, we strictly charge
 “ that the bishops of such cities and dioceses pro-
 “ vide fit men, who according to the diversity of
 “ their rites and tongues, may celebrate to them
 “ divine offices, and minister the ecclesiastical sa-
 “ craments, instructing them both by word and
 “ example.” * But supposing it to be of some
 importance, yet I think it is of much greater that
 the people should be allowed to understand what
 they do in the solemn acts of religion; and as a
 learned person says, “ That it is very unreasonable
 “ that for the sake of a few that travel, the many
 “ that stay at home should be left destitute, and for
 “ one man’s convenience ten thousand be exposed
 “ to eternal perdition.” † Here I cannot forbear
 tran-

* Concil. Lat. c. 9.

† Bishop *Williams*.

transcribing a passage of the late arch-bishop *Tillotson*, who having represented the Papists as saying,
 “ That it is *convenient* that God should be served
 “ and worshipped in the same language all the
 “ world over; replies, *Convenient* for whom? For
 “ God, or for the *people*? Not for God surely, for
 “ he understands all other languages as well as *La-*
 “ *tin*, and for any thing we know to the contrary,
 “ likes them as well; and certainly it cannot be so
 “ convenient for the *people*, because they generally
 “ understand no language but their own; and it is
 “ very inconvenient they should not understand
 “ what they do in the service of God. But perhaps
 “ they mean it is convenient for the *Romish* church
 “ to have it so, because this will look like an argu-
 “ ment that they are the *Catholic* or universal
 “ church, when the language which was
 “ originally theirs, shall be the universal lan-
 “ guage in which all nations shall serve God; and
 “ by this means also they may bring all nations to
 “ be of their religion, and yet make them never the
 “ wiser. And this is a very great *convenience*, be-
 “ cause knowledge is a troublesome thing, and ig-
 “ norance very quiet and peaceable, rendering men
 “ fit to be governed, and unfit to dispute.” *

Another reason which they offer why their mass is celebrated in *Latin*, is “ to avoid the changes which all vulgar languages are daily exposed to.” But methinks here it may suffice to say, that sure the remedy is much worse than the disease; for the inconveniencies that may arise from any changes which vulgar languages are subject to, are small and inconsiderable in comparison of the damage which men must sustain by being obliged to worship God in a language they are wholly strangers to. Besides, to urge this as a reason for their *Latin* service, is in effect

* *Tillotson's Works*, folio, Vol. 1. p. 277.

effect to give up the cause, for it goes on the supposition that vulgar languages, by the changes which they are subject to, may in time become *unintelligible*; and if this be a reason why they should not be used in divine worship, then surely it holds much stronger against the *Latin* tongue, which is already so, to the greatest part of men in all places.

The fourth and last reason which they urge for having their mass in *Latin*, is, “ That the mass “ being a sacrifice which the priest as minister of “ Christ is to offer, and the prayers of the mass “ being mostly fitted for this end; it is enough that “ they be in a language which he (*i. e.* the priest) “ understands. Nor, say they, is this any ways injurious to the people, who are instructed to accompany him in every part of this sacrifice by “ prayers accommodated to their devotion, which “ they have in their ordinary prayer-books.” Answer,

Whether or no the mass be a sacrifice which the priest as minister of Christ is to offer, is not my business here to enquire. But tho’ it should be so, and the prayers of the mass be mostly fitted for that end, yet I see not why upon that account it should be *sufficient* that the priest understands them; for if the people have any concern in the service he is performing, I should think they, as well as he, should understand what he is doing. And this they themselves seem to allow when they say, that the people are instructed to accompany him in every part of the sacrifice by prayers accommodated to their devotion, which they have in their ordinary prayer-books. And if they ought to understand what he is doing, I cannot but think they are *injurious* to them, in concealing the service from them in a language they are unacquainted with, and only referring them to their ordinary prayer-books for their direction.

And

And now having given you an account of what the apostle has said concerning the use of an unknown tongue in the public worship of God, and also shewn the weakness of what our adversaries are wont to alledge to evade the force of his arguments, and to support their practice of celebrating divine offices in a language which the people are generally strangers to, I think we have already sufficient ground to conclude that this their practice is not only *inexpedient* but *unlawful* too. But I proposed,

IV. More directly to prove this, and I think we can have no reason to doubt of it, if we consider,

In the first place, that it is contrary to *scripture*, which is the great rule to direct us how we are to worship God. This in some measure appears from what has been already said, and might be more fully and distinctly represented, if I had time.

Tho' *reason* tells us that God is to be worshipped, yet it is chiefly from the scriptures that we are to learn how we may worship him in an acceptable manner. But the directions which are therein given us for this purpose, are rendered impracticable by obliging men to worship in a language they understand not. Therein we are directed to pray and praise with *understanding* *, and to draw near to God with a *true heart* †; and to lift up our *hearts* with our hands to God in the heavens ‡, and to pray in *faith* **, in a humble dependance on the promises of God, thro' the merit and mediation of our Lord Jesus, for our acceptance with him. But how is it possible that these and such like directions can be observed, and the ends of worship sufficiently attained, when men are utter strangers to the language in which it is performed? It is to me an imposition upon the common sense of mankind to suppose,

* Ver. 15. Psalm xlvii. 7.

† Lam. iii. 41.

† Heb. x. 21.

** Jam. i. 6.

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suppose, that our *understandings* can be employed, or our *hearts* engaged, or that *faith* can be duly exercised, when we know not the meaning of the words we make use of. If it be said, that if the people come with an intention to serve God, and do exercise a general devotion, *that* is accepted, tho' they do not particularly understand the prayers that are made; I answer: This is more than they have any warrant to say. How far it may be accepted in those who are taught to believe it, and know no better, I will not pretend to determine; but it is plain that such a general devotion does by no means come up to what the scriptures require of us, and therefore they act a very ill part in making it necessary for them to take up with it.

Besides, The use of an unknown tongue in the worship of God, is contrary to the *practice of the primitive church*, yea of all Christian churches for many ages. This has been so clearly proved by our protestant writers in this controversy, that I need not now insist upon it.* Yea so full and strong are the evidences of it, that many of their own authors have been forced to acknowledge it. And if the worship of God in the common and vulgar tongue was the practice of our blessed saviour and his apostles, and of Christians for many hundred years after their days, I see not what right the church of *Rome* had to alter it, or with what face they can deny men this privilege, when they have neither scripture nor antiquity to support them in it.

Yea I add further, that the worship of God in an unknown tongue, is contrary to *reason*, and what our own minds if duly attended to, must tell us, is not a *reasonable service*. And here I think I may appeal to every man who will allow himself to judge impartially, Who is there that has any just conceptions

* *Bishop Williams's discourse on the worship of God in an unknown tongue*,— and a *Treatise in confutation of the Latin service practised in the church of Rome*.

conceptions of God himself, but must conclude, that such a worship is neither fit for us to offer, nor for him to accept? It is not fit for us to offer, who as reasonable creatures are supposed to act reasonably, and therefore to understand what we are about, especially in so solemn an action. Nor is it fit for God to accept from us, who as he has endued us with understanding, and will, and affections, so has a right to expect that these should be employed in his service; and when they are not, may he not reject it with disdain, and say as he did to his people of old in another case, *Offer it now to thy governour, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person?* *

And thus I hope it appears, that the practice of the *Romish* church, in obliging men to worship God in an unknown tongue, is *unlawful*, as well as *inexpedient*.

And now to close all in a few words,

Let us bless God for the *Reformation*, one happy effect of which was, the restoring us to the use of our bible, and to the privilege of worshipping God, in our own language; and let us be thankful for all the kind appearances of his providence in favour of these nations, whereby both our civil and religious liberties have been secured and handed down to us, notwithstanding the restless efforts of our enemies, to deprive us of them, and we have now the hope and prospect of having them long continued. And,

Let us pity the case of those who are deprived of these great and inestimable blessings, who are denied the free use of the scriptures, and are obliged to perform their public worship in a language unknown to them, whereby it is rendred very difficult, if not impossible for them to perform it in a right manner; and while they are taught that there is no salvation out of their church, are denied the very best means of salvation in it.

And

And as we are enjoying these privileges, let us take care to make a due improvement of them. Let us endeavour to be well acquainted with the *scriptures*. This, among other advantages we shall gain by it, will be our best defence against the errors of *Popery*; for whatever the church of *Rome* may pretend, the greatest part of their religion has no foundation there. And in all our attendances on God in the duties of his worship, let us take care to behave with a suitable frame and temper of mind, remembring that *He is a spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and truth*, * and can have no pleasure in those who *draw nigh to him with their lips, while their hearts are far from him* †. This is a behaviour very unbecoming in any who profess to worship God; but it will be more inexcusable in us who are allowed the privilege of our *own* language, than in those who are obliged to worship in an *unknown* tongue.

* John iv. 24.

† Mark vii. 6.

*The popish doctrine of auricular confession
and priestly absolution, considered.*

A

S E R M O N

PREACH'D AT

Salters-Hall, March 13, 1734-5.

By JOSEPH BURROUGHS.

JOHN XX. 21, 22, 23.

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.

THE province assign'd to me is to treat of *auricular confession* and *priestly absolution*: the former of which is one of the first things required in the Romish *sacrament of penance*, and the other the completion of it. I have chosen for the foundation of my discourse that text, on which the greatest stress is laid with regard

regard to the power of absolution: and this will naturally bring in all those things which are preparatory to it.

In my discourse I propose,

I. To set forth, from authentic records, the doctrine of the church of *Rome* on these heads.

II. To examine the ground upon which they herein proceed.

I. To set forth, from authentic records, the doctrine of the church of *Rome* on the heads of *auricular confession* and *priestly absolution*.

Now nothing can be more authentic in this case than the council of *Trent*. And this council declares concerning the sacrament of penance in general; *
 ' That our Lord then chiefly instituted it, when
 ' being raised from the dead he *breathed on his disci-*
 ' *ples, saying, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosesoever*
 ' *sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; and whoseoe-*
 ' *ver ye retain, they are retained.* In which so re-
 ' markable a fact and in so clear expressions (*they af-*
 ' *firm*) the power of remitting and retaining sins,
 ' in order to the reconciling of the faithful, who
 ' have lapsed after baptism, was communicated to
 ' the apostles and their legitimate successors.' It is
 plain, that they here ascribe to *the apostles and their*
legitimate successors, (who in the 6th chap. of the
 same session are explained to be *bishops and priests*)
 the power of *remitting and retaining sins* in the li-
 teral sense. For † they speak of *penance* as ' a sa-
 ' crament appointed for the remission of sins; a
 ' remedy of life to those who after baptism should
 ' deliver up themselves into the slavery of sin and
 ' power of the devil; by which sacrament (*they say*)
 ' the benefit of Christ's death is applied to those
 ' who lapse after baptism.' And, to make the mat-
 ter fully clear, they frankly acknowledge; ‡ ' that
 ' the

* Concil. Trident. Sess. XIV. cap. 1.

† Ibid.

‡ Cap. 3.

‘ the form of the sacrament of penance, in which
 ‘ chiefly its force lies, consists in those words of the
 ‘ minister, *I absolve thee*; and that the prayers,
 ‘ which according to the custom of holy church
 ‘ are laudably added, do not at all belong to the
 ‘ essence of the form, (*they are the council’s own
 words*) ‘ nor are necessary to the administration of
 ‘ the sacrament itself.’

Having thus laid the foundation of their sacrament in priestly absolution; they make no doubt to build upon it the necessity of confession to the priest, in order to his granting the absolution desired. For they affirm; * ‘ that in the very institution of this sacrament of penance, as before explained, there was likewise instituted by our Lord an entire confession of sins: and that such confession is *jure divino* necessary to all those who fall into sin after baptism; because, (if you will take their word for it) our Lord Jesus Christ, when he was going to ascend from earth to heaven, left the priests his vicars, as *presidents* and *judges*, before whom all mortal sins into which the faithful might fall should be brought, to the end that, according to the power of the keys for remitting or retaining of sins, they might pronounce sentence.’ And agreeably hereto, they have the confidence to speak of the confessional’s chair as † ‘ a tribunal, before which the lapsed are to be sited as criminals, that by the sentence of the priest they may be deliver’d from their sins.’ Nay, they are so clear in this point, as to affirm, ‡ ‘ that a priest who is under the guilt of mortal sin may by virtue of the holy Spirit conferr’d on him in his ordination, as a minister of Christ, exercise the function of remitting sins.’ For which they assign this admirable reason: ‘ that tho’ the absolution of a priest is the dispensing of a benefit which

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proceeds

* Sess. XIV. cap. 5.

† Cap. 2.

‡ Cap. 6.

‘proceeds from another; yet it is not a meer naked
 ‘ministry, either of preaching the gospel, or of
 ‘declaring that sins are forgiven; but is to be con-
 ‘sidered as *a judicial action*, in which a sentence is
 ‘pronounced by him in quality of *a judge*.’ Now
 ‘this judgment,’ they wisely * observe, ‘the
 ‘priest could not exercise without taking cogni-
 ‘zance of the cause; nor maintain equity in enjo-
 ‘ing punishments, if the penitents should declare
 ‘to him their sins only in general, and not in a spe-
 ‘cial and particular manner.’ From whence they
 collect, (and the whole superstructure of this doc-
 trine of auricular confession is meer collection and
 inference from a perverted text of scripture which
 is laid as the foundation) † that ‘penitents ought
 ‘in confession to recount all mortal sins, even the
 ‘most secret, of which they are conscious after a
 ‘diligent discussion; and likewise, for the reasons
 ‘before mentioned, all those particular circum-
 ‘stances which alter the kind of sin.’

As to the manner of confessing in secret before
 the priest alone; they have the assurance to affirm,
 that ‡ ‘this sacramental confession had been used
 ‘by holy church from the beginning, and always
 ‘commended by the most holy and most ancient fa-
 ‘thers.’ But they are more considerate than to of-
 fer at any proof earlier than the fourth *Lateran* coun-
 cil, held in the year MCCXV; which seems to have
 been the first that § enjoined this confession to be
 practis’d once every year. They might indeed
 have quoted a ¶ provincial council in *France*, held
 about the year DCL, which declared ‘repentance
 ‘of sins, which is the remedy of the soul, to be
 ‘useful to all’; and decreed, that ‘penance
 ‘should by the priests be appointed to penitents up-
 ‘on

* Sess. XIV. cap. 5.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

§ Concil. Lateran. cap. 21. apud *Labbé*, Tom. XI. par. 1. edit. *Par.*
 1671. pag. 172, 173.

¶ Concil. Cabilon. can. 8. apud *Labbé*, Tom. VI. pag. 389.

‘on their confession.’ But if they could have quoted much more early, or more considerable testimonies than this, from any of those *most holy and most ancient fathers*, of whom they were so wise as to speak only in general terms ; yet it wou’d have availed nothing in this case, where scripture and common sense are against them.

It has been already observed, that the * council of *Trent* makes an entire confession of sins, (that very confession, which in the same sentence they require should be made by a priest in the quality of *president and judge*) to be *jure divino* necessary to all those who fall into sin after baptism. But they are yet more particular and more terrible. For in the sixth canon they ‘anathematize all those who shall deny that sacramental confession is *jure divino necessary to salvation* :’ and in the seventh, ‘all those who shall venture to say, that in the sacrament of penance it is not *jure divino* necessary to the remission of sins, to confess all and every mortal sin, even the most secret, which can with diligent premeditation be call’d to mind, together with the circumstances which change the kind of sin :’ in the ninth, ‘all those who shall deny priestly absolution to be *a judicial act* :’ and in the tenth, ‘all those who shall deny, that priests under mortal sin have the power of binding and loosing ; or affirm, that any other than priests are the ministers of absolution.’

And these things I take notice of the rather, because of a most unlucky circumstance, with which this whole affair is attended ; which is the making the priest’s good intention necessary to the salutary effect of the absolution he gives. This is cautiously expressed in one of the † canons of the *Trent* council : which ‘anathematize any man who shall affirm, that sins are remitted to him who confes-

* Sess. XIV. cap. 5.

† Sess. XIV. can. 9.

‘ ses them, when the priest absolves not in earnest, but in jest.’ And one wou’d think, by the cautiousness of the expression, that the fathers of that council had found themselves hard press’d with this doctrine of the necessity of the priest’s good intention : which it is certain hangs like a millstone about the neck of all the Romish sacraments ; and renders it impossible for a Romanist to prove, that there is at this day any such thing as a priest, or indeed a christian, in the world ; because no man can certainly tell, whether the person from whom he received orders, or baptism, perform’d the service with the intention which the church requires. For thus * pope *Eugene IV*, in his decree at the council of *Florence*, held about the year MCCCCXL, expressly declares : ‘ All these sacraments, (*i. e.* all the seven, among which that of penance is particularly mentioned) are made up of these three parts : ‘ that is to say ; of things, as the matter ; ‘ of words, as the form ; and of the person of the ‘ minister, who confers the sacrament, with the intention of doing that which the church does : of ‘ which three if any one be wanting, the sacrament is not perfected.’ But indeed the council of *Trent* itself speaks plainly enough of this matter, to deserve to be charged with all the impious consequences which follow this doctrine. For they expressly tell their penitents ; † ‘ that they ought not ‘ so to flatter themselves concerning their own ‘ faith, as to think that they are absolved truly and ‘ before God, when the priest has not a mind to act ‘ seriously and absolve truly.’ Monstrous impiety ! and most unhappy penitents ! to whom no humiliation before an offended God, no satisfaction made to an injured neighbour, no resolution or endeavours of amendment, no real reformation of heart and life, nor all these together, can avail any thing, without the good-will of the priest ! and whom,

* *Labbé Tom. XIII. pag. 535.*

† *Sess. XIV. cap. 6.*

whom, according to this detestable doctrine, God himself cannot absolve from sin, unless the priest too, when he pretends to absolve in words, is so good as to do it with the serious intention of his heart!

But besides the confession, of which I have been treating, and besides that contrition which is to attend it; there is another thing insisted on by the church of *Rome*, before she will allow her priests to exercise their good intentions in giving absolution. Certain punishments are at the priest's discretion, enjoin'd to the penitents, under pretence of * making them more diligent for the future. These they call *satisfaction*; and make them a necessary part of their sacrament of penance; as necessary as contrition or confession. For the institutes of their canon law expressly tell us †, 'that neither 'contrition nor confession avail much, unless to 'both these be added satisfaction;' which in the same sentence is called 'a sort of compensation for an 'injury done.' And the council of *Trent* speaks as effectually as can be to the same purpose, when it ‡ anathematizes 'those who shall deny, that contrition, 'confession and satisfaction are all of them necessary 'in the sacrament of penance to the intire and perfect remission of sins.' Now, this satisfaction, the § council of *Florence* frankly tells you, is to be made *secundum arbitrium sacerdotis*, 'according to the 'will and pleasure of the priest, tho' chiefly by 'prayer and fasting, and alms.' Let it therefore be called a satisfaction made unto God through Jesus 'Christ;' as it is by the council of *Trent*; ¶ and let it be colour'd over ever so plausibly with the appearances of religion: yet as long as the appointing of this satisfaction is solely in the will and pleasure of the priest, it is plain that the great concern is

B b 3

made

* Concil. Trid. Sess. XIV. cap. 8.

† Lib. II. tit. 5.

‡ Sess. XIV. can 4.

§ *Labbé*, Concil. tom. XIII. pag. 538.

¶ Sess. XIV. cap. 9.

made the satisfying of him: if he be not well satisfied, there is no absolution to be had. If the penitent is not to the full as liberal to the church, and (I may add) to the priest in particular, as the priest himself thinks he should be; let him break his heart with contrition, and run ever so great a risque by exposing his secret sins and his most important affairs in confession; yet it all signifies nothing. Indeed effectual care is taken by the council of *Trent* to make the penitents liberal. For they plainly tell the priests, * ‘ that they ought, as far as the Spirit and prudence shall suggest, to enjoin salutary and suitable satisfactions, according to the quality of the crimes, *and the ability of the penitents*: lest if they shou’d connive at the sins confess’d, and deal too indulgently with the penitents, enjoining the slightest works for the greatest crimes, they should become partakers of other mens sins.’

Thus important are the priests made: who by the church of *Rome* are constituted *judges* and *arbiters* in the whole affair of repentance; even with regard to many things which one would think should be transacted between the penitent himself and God alone.

But it must be observ’d; that to keep the people the more effectually in subjection, there are some extraordinary cases reserved to the decision of the pope, and to bishops in their respective dioceses; concerning which the common priests are not allowed to judge. Only in the article of death there is no reservation: and therefore in that case, ‘ all priests are allowed to absolve any penitent from any kind of sins and censures.’ So says the † council of *Trent*. And so the Roman ritual, ‡ published by authority of pope *Paul V*: prescribing in that case only this short form; *I absolve thee from all*
censures

* Sess. XIV. cap. 8.

† Sess. XIV. cap. 7.

‡ Ritual. Rom. edit. 8vo. Antwerp. 1635. pag. 67.

censures and sins, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen. The forms of absolution in ordinary cases are longer; and the stress is openly laid, not upon that part wherein the priest 'prays that God would have mercy upon the penitent, and, forgiving his sins, guide him to eternal life;' for this, and another form to the same purpose, the priest is * expressly told he may omit: but upon the following form, which I shall take the liberty to repeat. † *Our Lord Jesus Christ absolve thee: and I, by his authority, do absolve thee, from every bond of excommunication, ‡ (suspension) and interdict, so far as I am able, and thou standest in need. Moreover I absolve thee from all sins in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen.* To this form is usually join'd another; which for its irreverence to our blessed Saviour, and contrariety to his doctrine, I cannot tell how to look upon as any thing better than antichristian: in these words. § *The passion of our Lord Jesus Christ; the merits of the blessed virgin Mary and of all the saints; whatsoever good thou hast done; and whatsoever evil thou hast suffered; be unto thee for remission of sins, increase of grace, and reward of eternal life. Amen.*

There are particular forms and measures appointed by the ritual for restoring of persons excommunicate to the communion of the faithful. There is likewise a method provided for absolving the dead, if in their life time they had given signs of contrition. But I will not detain you with the ** recital.

B b 4

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* Ibid.

† Ritual. pag. 66.

‡ N. B. This word (suspension) is added only in case the penitent be a clergyman.

§ Pag. 67.

** I shall take the liberty to offer to my reader what wou'd have been too tedious from the pulpit. Among the measures for restoring a living excommunicate; the penitent, if his crime be very great, is to take an oath, that he will obey the commands of the church which

I cannot dismiss this ritual without observing ; that it directs the priests * ‘ to ask *prudent questions* in such cases where the penitent does not express the number, the kinds, and the necessary ‘ circumstances of his sins :’ and that tho’ † it bids them take heed that they do not ‘ detain the penitents with curious or unprofitable questions, ‘ especially the younger people of either sex, or other persons, concerning things which they are ‘ ignorant of ; lest they should thereby take offence ‘ and learn to sin :’ yet the penitent is intirely at the mercy of the priest whether he shall be asked such questions or not : that it is notorious these things are often done, to the violation of all rules of modesty and decency ; and such thoughts of any kind suggested by the wicked priests, as may best serve the purposes

which shall be laid upon him on that account : and especially, that he will not thenceforward ever offend against that canon or decree, for the violating whereof he has incurrd censure. Then he is to kneel down on both knees and upon the shoulder, cover’d only with his shirt, (if it be a man) to be lash’d gently by the priest with a rod or cords, till the priest has recited a whole psalm appointed for that purpose. Then, after several prayers and responses, during which the priest is to be uncovered, he at length sits down, covers his head, and delivers a form, wherein he declares ; that ‘ he, by the authority of Jesus Christ, join’d with that of the pope, or the bishop, ‘ or other superior concern’d in the affair, does absolve him from his ‘ excommunication, in the name of the Father, &c. *Ritual.* pag. 68, 69. In order to the absolution of the dead excommunicate ; the body, if not yet buried, is to be beaten, and absolved, and then suffer’d to be buried in consecrated ground : if buried in a profane place, to be dug up, and after the same ceremonies to be buried in holy ground : but if it cannot conveniently be dug up, then the burying place is to be beaten, instead of the dead body : if buried in holy ground, then only the sepulchre to be beaten. During which beating, whether of the body or the sepulchre, the priest is to pronounce a certain form of words, and have responses made to him. After which follows the form of absolution, in these words : *I do, according to the authority granted to me, absolve thee from the bond of excommunication which thou hast incurred, [or art declared to have incurred] for such a fact ; and restore thee to the communion of the faithful : in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.* And then the whole work is concluded with prayers and responses. *Ritual.* pag. 70, 71.

* *Ritual.* pag. 63.

† *Pag.* 63, 64.

purposes of their lewdness, avarice, or malice : and that in the circumstances in which confession is establish'd by the church of *Rome*, there is no way to prevent such evils.

The effect of this sacrament of penance, (the * council of *Trent* tells us) ' with regard to its ' force and efficacy, is reconciliation with God : ' agreeably to what they had affirmed a little before ; ' that † the power of remitting and retaining sins ' was given to bishops and priests for that purpose ; ' and ' that ‡ this their sacrament is necessary to ' the salvation of those who have sinned after baptism.'

Thus I have set forth from authentic records the doctrine of the church of *Rome* concerning auricular confession and priestly absolution : in the doing which I could not avoid adding some other things relating to their sacrament of penance, which are necessarily connected with these two articles. If I have drawn out the account into too great a length, it was because I feared that a very brief relation would not give you a sufficient notion of doctrines, which you would wonder should ever enter the minds of profess'd christians. The setting them forth thus largely will, I hope, in the minds of protestants, who are acquainted with their bible, and acknowledge that for the only rule of their faith, go a good way towards a confutation, and thereby shorten my remaining work. However, I beg leave, according to my proposed method,

II. To examine the ground, upon which the church of *Rome* herein proceeds.

And here it will be necessary to consider attentively those texts of scripture, upon which they lay a stress in this argument : for they are forced in this case to have recourse to scripture, because they

* Sess. XIV. cap. 3.

† Cap. 2.

‡ Ibid.

they know that the common sense and reason of mankind are against them: and they are glad to catch at any plausible appearances, arising from a perversion of single difficult passages, detach'd from such as wou'd sufficiently explain them; because they know, that a fair comparison of one part of scripture with another wou'd turn to their confusion.

But I cannot forbear observing what a meer farce the council of *Trent* acts, in appealing to scripture at all, for the support of their doctrine of confession and absolution; when they had before laid it down as a rule, 'that it belongs to*
' mother church alone to judge of the true sense
' of holy scripture; and decreed, that no person
' whatever, trusting to his own prudence, in mat-
' ters of faith or manners, belonging to the edi-
' fication of christian doctrine, wresting the scrip-
' ture to his own sense, should dare to interpret
' the holy scripture contrary to that sense which
' holy mother church hath held and doth hold,
' or contrary to the unanimous consent of the fa-
' thers.' What a farce, I say, is it, after all this, to appeal to scripture? For if the decrees of the *Trent* council were ever designed to be of any use to the common people, (and if they were not, why do the fathers of that council, in their canons, oblige all without exception, under the penalty of a severe curse, to receive their doctrine?) if, I say, they were design'd to be of any use to the people, the quoting of scripture can never answer any such purpose; because the common people can make no judgment at all about it, for want of knowing *what sense holy mother church has always put upon scripture*, and what has been *the unanimous consent of the fathers* with relation to it. Nay, even if the decrees of this council were design'd only for the use of the priests, as one would be tempted to think they were: yet to what pur-

* Sess. IV.

pose is it to quote scripture? when, by appropriating *to the church alone* the right of interpreting scripture, they have taken it out of the power even of the priests to judge for themselves: besides that it is as impossible for the priests as the people to know *the unanimous consent of the fathers*; since it is well known that the fathers have differ'd very much in their judgments from each other.

But since notwithstanding these things they do pretend to shew respect to scripture, where they think it may serve their turn; let us examine whether the texts they produce can support the weight they lay upon them.

They tell us: 'Our * Lord then chiefly instituted the sacrament of penance, when being raised from the dead he *breathed upon his disciples*, and said; *Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins soever ye remit, they are remitted, and whosesoever ye retain, they are retained.*' And upon this text therefore they chiefly ground the power of the priest's authoritative absolution, and the necessity of auricular confession.

But nothing besides their usurped power of interpreting for all the christian world, could enable them to impose such a sense as this upon our Saviour's words. If it were true, that this was our Lord's mind with regard to the apostles themselves, the contrary to which I think is evident; yet how will this convey to the ordinary priests, in all succeeding ages, a power of granting authoritative absolutions at their own discretion; or of claiming a particular confession of secret sins in order thereto? When Christ *breathed upon the apostles*, as a token of conferring the Holy Ghost upon them, did he at the same time breathe upon all the priests that were to come into the world? Did he by the same action, or indeed by any other, convey the Holy Ghost to them? Did he give to
them,

* Concil. Trident. Sess. XIV. cap. 1.

them, or even to bishops themselves, all the same powers which he gave to the apostles?

It is evident that the words in question were spoken to the apostles, and to them alone, on the day when our Saviour arose from the dead: and we are to judge, by the circumstances of the persons to whom they were delivered, as well as by the words themselves, whether our Lord meant to apply them to any other than their own persons.

To the apostles it was said with great propriety: *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.* For this was an immediate and extraordinary mission of the apostles by our Lord Jesus Christ; as was that of Christ himself by his heavenly Father; tho' there was an unspeakable difference in the dignity of the persons sent, and in the extensiveness of the work. However, here was full power given by Christ to his apostles, to perform the work assigned to them; as there was by the Father to the Son, for the service in which he was to be employ'd. But will any man therefore affirm, that hereby were convey'd to bishops and priests in succeeding ages all the powers convey'd to the apostles? As well might he affirm, that the apostles did in this their mission from Christ receive all those powers with which Christ himself was invested, and that they were sent to do in all respects the same work.

But not to insist any longer on these introductory words; I proceed to those immediately following, upon which the great stress is laid. *And when he had said this, he breathed on them; and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained.*

Now, make as little allowance as you please for the strong figurative manner of speaking in the eastern countries; yet do but allow that Christ under-

understood what he was doing while he spoke these words, and I will appeal to you, or indeed to any man living, whether he cou'd possibly extend them to that sense, which you have seen the church of *Rome*, and particularly the council of *Trent*, ascribes to them. Can our Lord, by any construction of these words, be supposed to have left priests his vicars, as ‘*presidents* and ‘*judges*, before whom all mortal sins into which ‘the faithful might fall should be brought, that ‘according to the power of the keys for remitting or retaining sins they might pronounce sentence?’ Can any man believe, that in order hereunto ‘there was virtually instituted by the ‘same words an intire confession of sins to the ‘priest;’ and a power likewise conferred to enjoin what penances he should think fit, and then to say to the penitent, *I absolve thee*? Can any man really believe, that our Lord design’d such a process should have the effects which the council of *Trent* ascribes to it? particularly, that hereupon should follow ‘reconciliation with God;’ and that yet it should not be in the power of God to be reconciled to the penitent, where the priest happen’d to with-hold his good intentions when he pronounced the words of absolution?

It is impossible, I say, that such things as these should ever have been in our Lord’s intention: and particularly impossible, that he should have given to men the power of dispensing pardons in an arbitrary manner. The Son of God can never be suspected of giving any such power; since it would be inconsistent with the power of the divine Being himself: for besides what is to be said concerning frail mortal men in general, subject to passions and prejudices and mistakes; and besides that it is well known, thousands of priests are stupidly ignorant, of the christian religion, and almost of every thing else; it is certain, that wicked

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ed men (such as the council of *Trent* must acknowledge *priests under mortal sin* to be) might be erroneous enough to dispense pardons, where an all-wise and perfectly holy God, even with all his infinite mercy, would see good reason to refuse them.

It is indeed hard to conceive, how any man should in earnest believe these things. But this interpretation of our Saviour's words gives such an accession of power to the Romish bishops and priests; that any one, who observes their numerous incroachments in other respects, cannot much wonder they should insist upon it. But they have no other way to make such interpretations pass, than by detaching single sentences from their context; making no comparison with other texts which wou'd explain them; following, as in the case of transubstantiation, the strict literal sense, where it is most evident that sense cou'd never be intended; and making no allowance for figures of speech, where it is most evident they were designed; nor any consideration of the character and circumstances of the persons speaking or spoken to.

It is easy to darken any expressions whatever by such methods as these, and to give them a sense altogether different from what the speaker or writer intended; whereas if we will take fair and candid measures of interpretation, a clear light may be thrown upon passages which have really some obscurity in them. Thus, with regard to the words of our text: if we will make allowance for the figurative manner of expression; compare the passage with others which have a manifest relation to it; and consider how the apostles themselves understood it, by the tenor of their writings and conduct after they receiv'd this commission: we shall find the meaning to be something very different from the forced interpretation of the council of *Trent*. We shall find, that when our
Saviour

Saviour breathed on his apostles, and said to them, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; and whosoever ye retain, they are retained*; his meaning was to assure them, that they should receive that infallible guidance and assistance of the Holy Ghost, which should enable them, without any danger of mistake, to publish among men the terms upon which sinners should be pardoned, and upon the rejection whereof their sins should remain unforgiven. And hence indeed it will follow; that whoever shall in succeeding ages comply with those terms, though declared by uninspired men, shall receive the benefit of God's gracious pardon; and that they who reject those terms shall go without forgiveness. The effect therefore, of *having sins remitted or retained*, will in all ages of the church follow upon men's complying or not complying with the terms, which the Holy Ghost, conferred on the apostles, enabled them infallibly to make known; and consequently does not depend upon those terms being declared by a priest, any more than by a layman. If any man whatever, whether in holy orders or not, can be so happy as *to convert a sinner from the error of his way*, by bringing him to a due sense of it, and persuading him to comply with those terms of pardon and acceptance, which the apostles were enabled infallibly to publish; *he shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins*. Thus we are expressly assured by one of the apostles themselves; the apostle James, chap. V. 20. And that this prospect is not confined to ministers, or persons in holy orders, appears from the address in the preceding verse, to all *the brethren*, to whom the epistle is directed; *i. e. * to the twelve tribes scattered abroad*. To all these the apostle addresses himself, when he says, *Brethren, if ANY OF YOU do err from the truth, and one con-*
vert

vert him; let him know, that he shall save a soul from death.

I cannot forbear observing by the bye; that the case here specified, that of *brethren erring from the truth, and turning from that error*, is the very case of the *lapsed after baptism*; in which the church of Rome pretends their sacrament of penance does *jure divino* necessarily take place. And yet the apostle is so far from intimating any necessity of confession to a priest, or of such satisfactions as he shall enjoin, or of receiving absolution from his mouth; that without any difference between priest and people, he directs his discourse to the *brethren* in general, and encourages them with the hope, that any of them, if they will use their endeavours, may be so happy as to *convert a sinner from the error of his way, and thereby save a soul from death*.

And, I beseech you, what is *saving a soul from death*? Is it a whit less than *remitting of sins*, which is the phrase in our text? Yet both the one and the other is, we see, in the phraseology of scripture, ascribed to men, who are only the instruments of this *remission* and *salvation*, by persuading their brethren to comply with the gospel methods, to which *remission* and *salvation* are promised; whereas, in strictness of speech, it is certain that none but God can *save the soul from death*, any more than *remit sins*.

How evident is it, from this one passage of St. James, that allowance is to be made for figures of speech? How evident indeed is the necessity of this allowance in all writings, and even in conversation? And how much more frequent are strong figures of speech in the oriental writings, than in others? And how visible is it, that the scriptures abound with such manners of expression; which yet, by the circumstances wherein they are delivered, are easy enough to be understood? If it be
objected,

objected, that it is hard to suppose this should be done in the delivery of a commission; the objection is easily answered from precedents in the old testament; where the prophets are, in receiving their commission, told by the Most High himself, and without any danger of mistaking his meaning, that they are sent to do those very things, which 'tis plain they are only sent to declare. There is no need of quoting to this purpose any more than that one remarkable passage, *Jer. I. 9, 10. Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms; to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, and to build, and to plant.*

Will the Romanists say, that the prophet was to do all these things in the literal sense? Or will they pretend, that these words, together with the context from *ver. 5.* signify any more, than that *Jeremiah* was chosen of God, and by him perfectly furnished, and after an extraordinary manner sent forth, to declare his mind and will to the nations; and that the declarations so made should have their effect? Why, all this we allow was done by our blessed Lord with regard to the apostles; and affirm that their commission in our text is to be understood to this purpose, and not concerning the power of *remitting or retaining sins* in the literal sense.

If we will judge how the apostles themselves understood their commission, by the work in which they chiefly employ'd themselves; it will be easy to see, that they understood it to mean the preaching that gospel, upon the reception or rejection of which men shou'd be finally happy or unhappy. And when Christ chose them to be the first preachers of a doctrine, far from being favourable to the interests of designing men, or the pleasures of the

voluptuous; which for its naked simplicity would be despised by some, and must expect to meet with opposition from those in every nation, who were prejudiced in favour of sentiments and customs already in fashion; it was in great wisdom that he conferred on them the Holy Ghost: for hereby they were not only let into a more clear and comprehensive view of his whole counsel, and better establish'd in it, than under their remaining prejudices they cou'd otherwise have been; but were likewise furnished with extraordinary powers, for proving the certainty of their mission from him, and the certainty likewise of their delivering his true mind and will. These powers they accordingly exercis'd on proper occasions, as appears by their history: but all in subserviency to their grand work of preaching the gospel, and promoting in that way the interest of their master's kingdom. In which work they employ'd so much of their time; that if they had had any notion of the necessity of auricular confessions and authoritative absolutions, which it is plain they had not; yet it wou'd have been impossible for them to attend the service, tho' of all men in the world the fittest for it, because of that power of *discerning spirits*, which among other gifts of the Holy Ghost was imparted to them. And can any man believe, that the apostles understood the words in our text concerning authoritative absolutions; and that yet we shou'd have no account in the new testament of the thousands who must daily have flock'd to them in confession? What! not come to the apostles for absolution! who received immediately, from their master's own mouth, the authority to grant it! No: the apostles had taught no such doctrine; having no notion that their master meant any thing like it: and therefore no wonder the people followed no such practice.

Indeed,

Indeed, we need only consider the words of mission, compared with the apostles practice, and that of their Lord himself who sent them, to convince us what was the work, in which Christ design'd they should be employ'd, when he sent them forth. The words of mission are: *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.* Now I ask; What was the errand, upon which Christ here sent his apostles? Was it to sit privately in judgment upon men's secret sins, and to enjoin them penances according to their own will and pleasure, and then give them absolution? Or was it to publish to the world his gospel, *with the demonstration of the Spirit and power*; that gospel, which himself had taught them, and which he had assured them the Holy Ghost * *should bring to their remembrance*? One wou'd think, that Christ himself plainly enough told his apostles what was the errand upon which he sent them, by saying, that *as his Father sent him, even so he sent them.* For Christ in the whole tenor of his ministry declared, that the Father sent him to make known unto men his counsel for their salvation; and that it would have its effect in the salvation of those who embraced it, and the destruction of those who shou'd reject it: and this no doubt was the errand, upon which he sent his apostles. This is indeed visible beyond doubt in the two other places, where Christ's commission to his disciples is recorded: and therefore to them we ought to have recourse for explaining the figurative expressions in our text. *Mark xvi. 15, 16. Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be condemned.* The other passage, *Matt. xxviii.* is more to our present purpose in one respect; as it is prefaced, like our text itself, with the mention of Christ's own mission from

* John xiv. 26.

the Father, attended with powers which no man will be so extravagant as to affirm he communicated to others. *All power is given unto me in heaven and earth: go ye therefore, and teach all nations, &c.* This was the errand upon which the apostles were sent; *the teaching mento obey whatsoever Christ had commanded:* and this work, he signifies, it was his mind shou'd be carried on *even unto the end of the world*, by promising his presence and blessing to all those in any age who shou'd teach the same doctrine. But it will no more follow from hence, that those others in succeeding ages should be attended with all the same powers with which the apostles were attended, than that the apostles themselves had *all power in heaven and earth* given to them, as Christ declares in the beginning of this passage they were given to him.

But farther: the interpretation which I have given of my text, with regard to the awful effects of the apostles preaching, is confirmed by the words of St. Paul, 2 Cor. II. 15, 16. which are very near as strong in the phraseology, as those in the text itself. *We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life.* And 'tis to the same purpose, that the same apostle speaks of *his gospel*, i. e. the gospel which he preached, as that, *according to which God would hereafter judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.* Rom. II. 16.

And, that this is the true meaning of *remitting and retaining sins* in my text, appears plainly from that other text, press'd by the council of Trent into the service of authoritative absolutions; Matt. XVI. 19. where the power of *binding and loosing* is evidently the same as that of *retaining and remitting sins* in my text; and *the giving unto Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven* leads us to the true meaning of *binding and loosing*, and consequently explain the *remitting and retaining sins*, spoken of in my text. The
giving

giving unto Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven manifestly receives its explication from his having the honour first to preach the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven after our Lord's resurrection and ascension, whereby that kingdom was established. Whoever was first after this establishment employ'd to preach the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven, might very well be said, as it were, to open the gates of that kingdom, by *the keys* given him for that purpose. Now it is observable, that as some one person must be first in opening the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven; so the grant of *the keys* was made to one person; to *Peter* alone, and never to any other: but the power of *binding and loosing*, mention'd in the same verse, and in *Matt. xviii*, and that of *remitting and retaining sins*, in *John xx*, were granted to all the rest of the apostles in conjunction with him: and therefore that trite phrase, of *the power of the keys*, confounded as it is with the power of *binding and loosing*, *remitting and retaining*, and applied to authoritative decisions of ecclesiastical men, plainly appears to have no foundation.

But tho' the grant of *the keys* is not the same thing as the *binding and loosing*, presently after mentioned; yet it leads to the true meaning of it. Christ assures *Peter*, that in his preaching he should be enabled so effectually to deliver the terms, on which the Most High would receive sinners to mercy, as that no persons upon earth who comply'd with those terms should fail of being forgiven; and so to denounce the wrath of God against the unbelieving and disobedient, that whoever should reject his doctrine, and despise the authority upon which it was founded, should not obtain pardon. This is the plain meaning of the promise made to *Peter*, that *what he should bind upon earth, should be bound in heaven, and what he should loose on earth, should be loosed in heaven*. Now since this *binding and*

loosing is the same as *retaining and remitting sins*, and is in the promise to *Peter* intimately connected with preaching the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven: the true meaning of *binding and loosing*, and consequently of *retaining and remitting sins* by virtue of a commission from Christ, must be preaching that doctrine, according to the tenor of which men should have their sins either *remitted* or *retained* by the great judge of all. And well might they, who were sent with a special commission from Christ, to preach that gospel, according to the reception of which the condition of its hearers was to be finally determined; well might they, I say, in a figurative manner of speech, be said by their preaching to *bind* upon the rejecters of it their great *sin* in rejecting it, or in the language of our text, *to retain their sins*; and to *loose those from their sins*, or *remit their sins to them*, who embraced a gospel which expressly promises forgiveness to all that embrace it. In a literal sense the words are not capable of being taken, without great absurdity, and encroaching upon the prerogative of God. And the sense in which I have explain'd them agrees so perfectly with a number of other scriptures which are clear to the same purpose, and with the character and conduct of the apostles, to whom the commission was given; as plainly shews this to be the true meaning. And thus the whole Romish doctrine of authoritative absolution, built upon the perversion of our Saviour's words, at once falls to the ground.

If we were to consider that other passage, where *binding and loosing* are mention'd; I mean * *Matt.*
xviii.

* *Matt.* xviii. 15—18. Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more; that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear,

xviii. we should find that it is as far from the purpose of the Romish sacrament of penance, as those already considered; tho' it is certain it has a relation to sins committed by christian brethren, whereas the others relate to the effects of preaching the gospel. It is somewhat uncertain, whether the words were directed to the apostles alone; or to other disciples with them. But if it was to the apostles alone; yet 'tis plain it was not in their apostolical character, but as subjects in general of *the kingdom of heaven*, mention'd in the beginning of the chapter; and relates to trespasses committed by one christian against another. In which cases, our Saviour, instead of sending the offender to confess to a priest, advises the person offended to go, and in a kind and gentle manner to admonish his brother, in order to reclaim him from his sin. Upon failure of success in this charitable attempt, he is directed to take with him one or two more; still with the same design, but so ordered as to carry more force with the admonition. If this is likewise unsuccessful; then *the church*, i. e. a society of the faithful is to be acquainted with the affair: and if the admonition of the church, acting suitably to the known mind of Christ its lawgiver, is rejected; our Lord signifies, that the good admonition, given so agreeably to the duty of those that gave it, and so wickedly rejected by the offender, will *bind* his sin upon him; and that their judgment in separating from him, shall be confirm'd *in heaven*. And he further signifies, that their judgment would likewise be ratified in heaven, if upon good evidence of his repentance he shou'd be restored to their communion. But still, in this, as well as in preaching the gospel before mentioned, there must be understood some

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rule,

hear them, tell it unto the church. But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily, I say unto you: whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.

rule, some certain rule, of the mind of Christ, laid down and observed, before the effect of *binding* or *loosing* can take place. The thing is not left to the will and pleasure, of the preacher in the one case, or of the offended person, or even the church itself, in the other: but the mind of the law-giver, regarded or not regarded, is that which *looses* a person from his sins, or *binds* them upon him; tho', according to the phraseology of scripture, it is in a figurative sense ascribed to the instrument or means, by which this *binding* or *loosing* is effected. And in this sense St. * *Paul*, speaking of a person, from whom, for a notorious offence, the church of *Corinth* had withdrawn, and who had afterwards given sufficient proofs of sincere repentance, advises the *Corinthians* to *forgive* him; and declares that *he forgave him also*; and that whomsoever he had forgiven on their account, he had done it *in the person of Christ*, i. e. by his authority, and under the infallible assurance of his approbation.

Thus, I think, are the words of my text fairly rescued from that false gloss which the council of *Trent* had put upon them. But there are other texts, to which they have recourse for supporting their pretensions. Particularly, † they force into the service of their sacrament of penance the words of St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* v. 11, 12. wherein he advises the christians of the church of *Corinth* *not to keep company with any brother who is a fornicator, or covetous, or a drunkard, or an extortioner*; giving this reason for it; (which, because it contains the word *judge* in it, is greedily snatch'd at) *For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?* But the bare recital of this text, in its proper connexion, is sufficient to shew, that it relates to open faults, to which a publick

* 2 *Cor.* ii. 5,—v1.

† *Con. Trid. Sess. xiv. cap. 2.*

lick censure is due; and has no relation to auricular confession or priestly absolution.

'Tis as little to the purpose that * they quote the words of the same apostle to the *Ephesians*, chap. ii. ver. 3. wherein he tells them, that *they had been children of wrath, even as others*: for they suggest no manner of reason for confessing sins privately to a priest; which is the whole tenor of that chapter of the *Trent* council, where this text is quoted.

As little is it to the purpose, that the new testament expressions, of *violating the temple of God*, 1 Cor. iii. 17. *grieving the holy spirit of God*, Eph. iv. 30. *doing despight unto the Spirit of grace*, Heb. x. 29. and *treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath*, Rom. ii. 5. are † produced to shew, that they who have sinned after baptism, should submit to whatever penance the priest shall be pleased to enjoin as a satisfaction for their sins.

Nor is it a whit more to the purpose, that the ‡ *Profession of catholic faith*, lately publish'd in the *English* tongue, for the reception of converts into the church of Rome, refers us to the old law, "as a figure of the law of Christ," to favour the Romish doctrine and practice of confession. For, what if leprosy was a figure of sin? What if the leprous were obliged, by the express command of an abrogated dispensation, to *shew themselves to the priests*? Will it thence follow, that under the new testament christians must, without any command or direction from Christ their law-giver, confess their sins to a priest, and take absolution from him? What if the *Israelites* were ** obliged to make confession, when they had been guilty of a trespass, in defrauding their neighbours, or taking away their property by violence? What if after restitution atonement was according to the Mosaic law to be made by a priest? Yet this will never prove, that under the gospel, which acknowledges

* Cap. 5.

† Cap. 8.

‡ Page 22.

** Numb. v. 5,—8. Lev. vi. 2,—7.

knowledges no priest but Christ himself, christians are obliged to confess to a minister their secret sins; or that forgiveness at the hand of God depends upon a mortal man's absolution. What if upon St. Paul's preaching the gospel, attended *with the demonstration of the spirit and of power*, by the miracles which he wrought, * *many who believed came publickly, and confessed, and shewed their deeds?* as, upon the preaching of John the baptist, † *Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, went out to him, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.* Do these things lay any obligation upon those who are already become christians, to confess their sins privately to a priest, and kneel down before him for pardon? And lastly; how vile is the perversion of that text, *Jam. v. 16.* and how wisely did this catechist act, in concealing the greatest part of the verse? for the whole verse runs thus: *Confess your faults one to another; and pray for one another; the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* Now what colour of a reason is there to believe, that *confessing to one another*, in order to mutual forgiveness, could mean confessing to the *elders of the church*, mention'd in a quite different case in the preceding verses? The same persons are bid to *confess their faults to one another*, who are likewise bid to *pray for one another*; and therefore if the people are by this text directed to *confess* to the priests, the priests are likewise directed to confess to the people; if the priests are bid to *pray for* the people, so are the people bid to *pray for* the priests. And I am entirely of opinion; that the prayer here described, *the ‡ inwrought prayer of a righteous man*, even though he never were in orders, would be as much regarded at the throne of grace, and become as effectual for the forgiveness of an offence committed against himself and confess'd

to

* Acts xix. 18.

† Matt. iii. 5, 6.

‡ δ-ησις ἐ-εργαμένη.

to him, as if he were possess'd of the highest honours the church of *Rome* itself is able to confer.

Thus we have seen how little there is in the numerous passages I have been considering, to the purpose for which the Romanists produce them: that they really mean quite other things than they bring them to prove. We have seen in particular, that there is not in the words of my text, on which the greatest stress is laid, any authoritative power of absolution committed unto men; nor any confession to a priest instituted; tho' the council of *Trent* says it contains both. We have seen, that what they interpret concerning the power of granting or with-holding the pardon of sin by bishops and priests was meant by our Saviour concerning the awful effects of preaching his gospel by the apostles, under the infallible guidance of the Holy Ghost. We have seen, that our Saviour could not be capable of putting such a sense upon his own words, as the council of *Trent* has put; because it is inconsistent with the authority of God's own government. And an intimation has likewise been given of the dangerous tendency of that minute and particular confession, which the church of *Rome* requires the people to make to the priests, of the most secret sins, together with their circumstances. But the dangerous tendency of this, and likewise of their doctrine of absolution, deserves a little more of our attention.

It has been already observed, that according to the circumstances in which confession is established in the church of *Rome*, there is the utmost danger of violating all rules of modesty and decency; by putting questions, under pretence of searching sin to the bottom, which shall suggest wicked thoughts to the minds of young and unexperienc'd persons, such as otherwise would never have enter'd there. But besides this; auricular confession is directly calculated, as there is no doubt it was design'd, to put
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the poor penitent wholly in the priest's power with regard to estate, and reputation, and even life itself. The laity, I say, must in all these respects be intirely at the mercy of the clergy, if they can be brought to make it a point of conscience to confess to them all their failings. And to what purpose is it for the canon law to tell us, * ' that if a priest ' reveals what he hears in confession, he shall be ' deposed, and wander about in disgrace all the rest ' of his life?' If a priest who is himself *under* the guilt of *mortal sin* shou'd be so wicked as to break his oath of secrecy; it wou'd be no very great wonder. And in that case, what reparation can the sending him to travel abroad make for the unspeakable mischiefs of his perjured treachery? In the mean time, where is the probability, that the Son of God, who had so tender an affection for his whole church, as to *purchase it with his own blood*, wou'd lay it under the hard necessity of such an intire dependence upon its officers?

Then, as to the doctrine of absolution: I beseech you to consider, how directly that tends to the destruction of all morality and piety, all virtue and serious religion. For, how strong a temptation must it be to a man vitiously disposed, to be taught, that a priest, whom he may hope some way or other to influence, can absolve him from most crimes to which his wicked heart is inclined? however, that his bishop can do it; or at the worst, that the pope can do it: and that the great judge of all has so far put the matter out of his own power, that he must confirm in heaven the judicial sentence which shall be pass'd in his favour here upon earth? What regard, I say, will such a man pay to the judgment of the Almighty? what sense of religion will he retain towards him? or what sense of the natural obligations of virtue in his conduct towards men? How will he despise the doctrine of the necessity of restraining corrupt affections in order

* Dist. vii. de poenit. cap. 4.

order to be truly happy? All thoughts of this kind will be treated with the utmost contempt, when he considers, that, according to the doctrine of the infallible church, he need only put on an appearance of contrition, confess the sin he has committed or resolved upon, submit to the penance enjoined, and receive absolution; and that then, having made satisfaction for his sin, he is a clear man, and may go on in a course of the like actions, without any necessity of a real reformation. Thus the whole process of the Romish sacrament of penance has a tendency to make men regard external performances as an equivalent for inward and real religion, to draw off their minds from attending to it, and at length to extinguish the sense of it.

And the tendency this way is the more evident, when we consider, that in the article of death, as we have already seen, all priests are obliged to absolve from all sins without exception. This the wicked layman knows beforehand: and may thereby be encouraged to indulge himself in all manner of sins, in the expectation of receiving absolution at last, and the viaticum of the eucharist into the bargain: both of which the * priests of the church of *Rome* are, under pain of ecclesiastical censure, obliged to give to those who are dying by distempers, and likewise to malefactors just before their execution, if they desire it.

The papists indeed, and particularly the author or authors of the † catechism already quoted, do not fail to charge some protestants with undertaking to absolve dying penitents in a solemn manner, as by authority from Christ. But this I shall not meddle with; my business being to consider the doctrine of absolution as it stands in the church of *Rome*. Now, besides the natural tendency of their doctrine for encouraging sin in the course of life; I would intreat you to consider, with regard to a dying

* Instit. jur. canon. lib. ii. tit. 5.

† Prof. of cath. faith, p. 21.

ing sinner under trouble of mind; which is the wiser and better method, which more agreeable to the character and duty of a christian minister, and more likely to administer real comfort where there is room for it: to declare to him the abundant goodness, and yet the perfect purity and rectitude of the divine being; to give him necessary instructions concerning the disposition which God requires, mingled with assurance of his mercy to the truly penitent; to acquaint him with the gospel terms of forgiveness, and exhort and encourage him to comply with them; and then, with hearty prayers for him, to leave him to the mercies of God, and the reflections of his own mind: or to hear his confession, and then say; * *I absolve thee from all censures and sins, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.*

But if all profess'd ministers of Christ were to act thus consistently with the principles of their religion; if they were to take no more upon them than to explain and exhort, to lay the scripture doctrine before the people, and labour to bring them to a compliance with its directions: *the power of the keys, the power of binding and loosing, of remitting and retaining sins,* and in short, the whole power of the church of *Rome*, would be demolish'd, which they are resolved shall at any rate be kept up. Explications, and exhortations, and the ministring of spiritual comforts, or of divine warning separate from human terrors, are thought too mean employments for men, who think themselves so capable of disposing God's favours, as to pretend to determine what punishments in this life shall avail to the pardon of sin. Of this I have given you a general account already, relating to their doctrine of satisfaction. Give me leave now, in the conclusion, to remind you of that doctrine: where-
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* Ritual. Roman, p. 67.

in they teach, that * we ‘ may satisfy God the
 ‘ Father thro’ Jesus Christ, not only by punish-
 ‘ ments, of our own accord undertaken for re-
 ‘ venging of sin, or imposed by the will of the
 ‘ priest, according to the measure of the crime;
 ‘ but also by temporal scourges, inflicted of God,
 ‘ and patiently borne by us.’ In pursuance of this
 doctrine it must be, that in one of their forms of
 absolution, already quoted from their ritual, they join
 ‘ whatever evils the penitent himself has suffered,
 ‘ with the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, towards
 ‘ his obtaining remission of sins, and the reward of
 ‘ eternal life.’ In pursuance of this doctrine they
 have an extraordinary law, peculiar to themselves,
 express’d in the words of pope *Clement III.* and in-
 serted in the † body of the canon law: wherein it
 is decreed, with regard to ‘ those who shall take
 ‘ publick prostitutes out of the stews, and marry
 ‘ them, that this shall avail to the forgiveness of
 ‘ their sins:’ and that for this reason; ‘ that among
 ‘ works of charity it is none of the least to call
 back wanderers from the error of their ways.’ To
 this doctrine likewise has been owing the senseless
 superstition of pilgrimages, to our Lady of *Loretto*,
 to St. *Jago di Compostella*, to the holy sepulchre,
 and a number of other sanctified persons and places.
 In which pilgrimages, many of them imposed in
 penance, as well as others voluntary, men have left
 their families, squander’d away their estates, de-
 stroy’d their health, and usefulness and often life
 itself. *Erasmus* has, with inimitable spirit and
 judgment, exposed these follies. I mention them,
 and the other particulars before named, as amazing
 instances of the presumption of the Romish cler-
 gy,

* Con. Trid. Sess. xiv. cap. 9.

† Inter opera charitatis non minimum est, errantem ab erroris
 semita revocare. Statuimus, ut omnibus, qui publicas mulieres de
 lupanari extraxerint, & duxerint in uxores; quod agunt, in remissi-
 onem proficiat peccatorum. *Decr. Gregor. lib. iv. tit. i. cap. 20.*

gy, and of the real power accruing to them by boldly persevering in that presumption. They take to themselves the prerogative of God, in declaring that such and such things shall avail to the pardon of sins, when God himself has made no such promise. And, as we have before seen, they have the presumption to ascribe reconciliation with God to their own arbitrary absolutions. They make the effect of absolution itself to depend upon their own kind intention. They will not allow that the Most High can refuse what they grant, or grant what they have a mind to refuse. And yet all this is cover'd with the specious pretence of divine authority and commission. In consequence of all this, they lay upon the people what injunctions they please, by way of satisfaction for sin: and the inconsiderate people, concluding that these must be extraordinary men indeed, who persist in the claim of such extraordinary powers as by commission from God himself, and who appeal to scripture for it, which scripture they themselves are not permitted to look into; are before they are aware hurried into an acknowledgment of their spiritual powers, and an obedience to all their injunctions. Which obedience is indeed the more easy, because the things on which the church of *Rome* lays the greatest stress in this doctrine of satisfaction, are visibly such as may be complied with by men of carnal minds; who will submit to any chastisements and external difficulties, provided they may be excused from the trouble of subduing and mortifying corrupt inclinations. Let them but have their way here, and they will give up all power into the hands of the clergy: and so likewise will weak ignorant people of better principles, in the hopes of having eternal happiness secured to them by these favourites of heaven.

And thus is the very point gained, to which the ambitious clergy turn their whole views. Power,
extensive

extensive temporal power, is the darling object of these men's desires. And they enlarge their claims on a spiritual account, on purpose to encrease their power in a temporal respect; going on from one step to another, till they seem to think themselves as gods over the rest of the world. These are the men, who are for crushing all such as in the least differ from the fashionable doctrines and ceremonies, to which they themselves are indebted for their grandeur: and, instead of softening matters, out of a tender regard to their brethren's weakness, as by virtue of their character they are obliged to do, take advantage of every little difference, to aggrandize themselves by widening the breach. They encourage the imposing of needless difficulties upon their brethren; whereby they prevent much of their usefulness to the state: and when once such burthens are laid on, they can never find a seasonable or proper time to have them removed, but employ all their influence to keep them fast bound. I might have added; that they are not content to lay smaller difficulties upon their brethren; but that they persecute with the utmost cruelty, even unto death, for meer differences in speculation; so little can they bear to be look'd on as any thing less than masters of the consciences of all mankind. But the cruelty of the Romish persecutions is a copious subject: and is committed to one, who I doubt will not handle it to your satisfaction.

When men arrogate thus to themselves the prerogative of the divine Being, and even a superiority to him, pretending that he cannot forgive where they do not or will not; and when it appears that in all these pretensions they chiefly aim at temporal power; no wonder that deism abounds; no wonder, that in *Rome* particularly, the seat of the pope, who of all others arrogates the highest power to himself, there are so many deists, and so many atheists. If this be christianity, it is natural for a

man to say, I will be any thing else rather than a christian. And even in protestant countries; by how much the more the power of the priests in these respects is cried up, by so much the more danger is there of men's casting off all regards to the christian religion.

For the improvement of what you have been hearing, let me intreat you to be thankful to God; whose great goodness bestows upon you the inestimable blessing of liberty to consult his word, for your instruction and comfort. By this sacred record, which you have in your own hands, you are taught quite other doctrine concerning repentance and remission of sins, confession and absolution, than the church of *Rome* teaches. Be exhorted to follow the directions there laid down. And let not what you have now heard, concerning the corruptions of the church of *Rome*, keep you back, but rather excite you, to a serious confession of your sins before God, with abhorrence of them, and resolutions and the most earnest endeavours against them. Let it excite you to seek absolution from that great and wise, that just and yet gracious governour, whom by your sins you have offended, and * *with whom alone there is forgiveness, that he may be feared*. Be not afraid to go to God himself, in the name of Jesus Christ. Ask of him the pardon of your sins: and you will not be denied. Let it be the sincere desire of your hearts, and endeavour of your lives, to please him: and whenever in any respect you have offended him, do not cherish or palliate the evil of which you have been guilty: do not plead for it, or harbour it in your affections; and dare not to repeat it in your practice: but humble yourselves before him against whom you have sinned: implore his mercy in the forgiveness of it, and his gracious assistance to get rid of its power. And whereinfoever you have offended against your
fellow

fellow creatures; if the offence requires a particular acknowledgment, make that acknowledgment to him whom you have offended, and make all the reparation you are able: and if he has a grain of goodness in him, he will do his duty in a hearty forgiveness: however you will not fail of acceptance with God, and of that peace and comfort, which naturally follow the discharge of your own duty. If any man has by his follies so involv'd himself, that he knows not how to direct his conduct: let him consult any wise and good man, whether minister or not minister, it matters not; and get all the assistance he can for his guidance, and for restoring the comfort of his mind. Such a confession as this, upon extraordinary occasions, no serious christian, of any denomination whatever, can think improper. But then remember: that you are to follow this advice so far only, as it shall approve itself to your own deliberate judgment, from its conformity to reason and scripture: that a grave experienced person, of any employment in life, may be very useful by his advice: but that no man, of any character, can oblige you to follow it in obedience to him; or, without breaking in upon the authority of God himself, pretend to give absolution from sin upon such obedience, as the Romish priests do.

If I am speaking to any of the deluded votaries of that corrupt church; I wou'd most earnestly intreat them to satisfy their minds with true repentance towards God, restitution to their neighbour, and real amendment of life; without any anxiety about confessing to a priest, or receiving his absolution. Be so good to your own souls, as to believe the words of Christ himself; who does not insist upon such penances and satisfactions as your priests lay upon you: * *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* † *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.* You

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want

* Matt. xi. 28.

† John vi. 37.

want no other mediator to appear before God in your behalf; no priest, to make or to repeat that atonement, which he himself has compleatly made already, and which he made * *once for all*. *He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* He has directed his apostle to assure us, that † *if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* And herein he does not make that difference which the council of *Trent* makes; of sins before, and sins after baptism. Nor is there in this, or any other text in the whole new testament, any mention or intimation of the necessity of confession to a priest, or of submitting to his arbitrary penances, in order to absolution. The confession is to be made to God; as the absolution is to come from him.

To conclude. Let us all, both ministers and people, converse daily with the sacred oracles; which will be our surest defence against corruptions of all kinds. My reverend brethren in the ministry, I am satisfied, are too wise to be displeased at being put in mind of the importance of this duty: its importance to their establishment as christians and protestants, and to their usefulness as ministers. And if christians in general would make it their practice to study the scriptures with impartial minds, we should have no alarms of popery: for so long as this practice is kept up, it is impossible that the corrupt doctrines of the church of *Rome* should be entertain'd.

* Heb. x. 10. ix. 12.

† 1 John i. 9.

The Popish Doctrine of Merit and Justification considered.

A

S E R M O N

PREACH'D AT

Salters-Hall, March 20, 1734-5.

By J O H N N E W M A N.

R o m. iv. 4.

Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

THAT part of the subject against Popery which falls to my lot in this exercise, is to state and confute the doctrine of the *Romish* church concerning the merit of good works, and the nature of a sinner's justification before God; or the way and method in which he may find favour and acceptance with him. The words I have now read will lay a sufficient foundation for the following discourse, if you consider

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how they stand connected with the context. St. Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, instances in the example of *Abraham*, the father of the faithful, that eminent pattern of faith and trust in God, that he was *justified by faith, and not by works*; for if he had been justified by works, *he had had whereof to glory, but not before God*: but the scripture saith, *Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.*

This doctrine is of a more evangelical and practical nature than some that have gone before, in which your eternal salvation is nearly concerned. It's no trifling or indifferent matter, or mere speculation which has no influence upon practice, on what you build your hope of eternal life, whether on the merits of *Christ*, or your *own* merits in conjunction with his. If men were well acquainted with the holy scriptures, had but a just veneration for them, and did but pay a due regard to their plain declarations, one would think that a few such passages as this in my text, might be sufficient to convince any unprejudiced person what the scripture doctrine is, and so determine the controversy between us and the Papists. But seeing they are conscious the Bible is against them, no wonder they keep it out of sight as much as possible, and will not trust the common people with the free use of it. However, since they acknowledge it to be in part their rule of faith, and we own it to be our only and intire rule, we must form our notions of every doctrine of faith according to that revelation. Whatever becomes of their unwritten tradition, we are sure ** all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according*

* 2 Tim. iii. 16. Isa. viii. 20.

according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

I shall begin with considering the Popish doctrine concerning the merit of good works, and observe the following method.

First, I shall lay down some things for the stating of it, to prevent mistakes. *Secondly*, Prove that to be the doctrine of their church which I shall charge them with. *Thirdly*, I shall shew that there can be nothing meritorious in the sight of God in the best works of good men: and, *Lastly*, hint at the evil tendency, and mischievous consequences of the contrary doctrine, which is a just prejudice against it.

I. *First*, I shall lay down some things for stating the doctrine. And *First*, We must distinguish between such works as are done *before justification and grace*, and those which are performed *afterwards*; and between what they call a *merit of congruity*, and a *merit of condignity*. By the former, they mean such works as deserve a reward, not indeed out of any obligation arising from justice, but out of a principle of fitness, and the free bounty of God. By the latter, they mean such works as do in and of themselves, and in point of strict justice, deserve the reward. This higher kind of merit they only ascribe to the good works of justified persons, who have had a principle of grace communicated to them. As for those works done before grace, some of their schoolmen assert that a merit of congruity belongs to them, or that they deserve to be rewarded with pardon, and supernatural grace. But this is strange kind of doctrine, and argues gross ignorance both of the *condition* of human nature, in its present fallen state, and the *extent* of gospel grace. The scripture represents men in their natural state as *dead in trespasses and sins, alienated from the life of God. The carnal mind is enmity against God, not subject to the*

law of God, neither indeed can be. They that are in the flesh cannot please God. We need preventing grace to enable us to perform every thing that is morally good. Whatever is done without it partakes of the nature of sin, and is so far displeasing to him, instead of meriting any thing from him. Besides, they seem equally ignorant of the *riches* and *extent* of gospel grace. God is always ready to assist our weak and honest endeavours. He does not require that we should set about any duty in our own strength, unassisted by his grace, and he will not be wanting to those who are not wanting to themselves. But if sinners think themselves sufficient for every duty, without an humble dependance on divine grace, they discover so much pride and ignorance, that instead of securing the divine favour and acceptance, they will expose themselves to his highest resentment. I shall not insist longer upon this, because the council of *Trent* denies that there is any merit of congruity in this kind of works. Some have wondered at the reason of it, because this sort of merit is as much asserted by some of those schoolmen who were favoured by them as the other of condignity, and there is as much reason why they should allow the one as the other. The learned Dr. *Allix* does, as I think, assign the true cause of this, *viz.* that there is not so much to be got by the former as the latter. If works done before grace could merit grace, then the power of conferring it would not belong to the sacrament of penance and their other sacraments, which the priests only have the administration of; and for a well known reason they are willing to keep the power in their own hand, that the people may have a slavish dependance on them. But it's otherwise with their doctrine of the merit of condignity. They cannot renounce this without overthrowing the foundation of indulgences, and so justifying the Reformation

formation begun by *Luther*. By this means the Popes and Monks would lose their credit, and the intire revenue of their indulgences. This was a sufficient reason why that mercenary church should make a difference between the one kind and the other.

I observe *Secondly*, That those works, which many of them lay the greatest stress on, and place the greatest merit in, are not *truly good*. They usually consist in penances and pilgrimages, in paying for masses, in endowing churches and monasteries, in saying so many *Ave-Maries*, and in paying their devotions to saints and angels before images and relicks, with the like trumpery. How little do they ever insist on the weightier matters of the law and gospel, on justice, faith, and the love of God, on the duties of spiritual mortification and self-denial? They will sooner forgive the commission of the grossest sins and the neglect of the most substantial moral duties, than the omissions of their own superstitions. These things are at best but will-worship, the fancies and contrivances of crafty and covetous men, which have no foundation either in reason or scripture. They are so far from being meritorious in the sight of God, that it's difficult to conceive how any who have an high value for such things, and who place a great confidence in them, can be in a justified state. Tho' they who abound in this kind of works may merit much of priests and Jesuits, it argues gross ignorance of God's nature and moral perfections, to think that they can be of any account with him. He may justly say to such, *Who has required this at your hands? Bring no more such vain oblations, they are an offence and an abomination to me.*

I acknowledge *Thirdly*, That some of the Popish writers do not carry the doctrine of merit so high as others do. They write with greater decency

cency and modesty; their notions, at least in words, are less assuming and shocking: But then these are usually such as have wrote in Protestant countries, or in such where there has been a great mixture of Protestants with Papists, or when they have been forced to betake themselves to colour and art in answering those that have wrote against them, or when the blessed design of making new converts has been set on foot. Then they have made as artful a representation of their doctrine as possible, that it might look like the doctrine of Protestants, that so the unwary reader might be the more easily deceived and imposed on. But whatever seeming modesty and moderation there may be in these representations, and however they may come forth approved and recommended by great names, when they have had a turn to serve; I cannot think there has been much sincerity in them; especially when they have been published as the doctrine of their church, and not as their own private sentiments. My reason is this; when the same moderate notions have been preached and published by others of less note, who could not so well serve the interest of mother church, they have been censured and condemned for them, and suspected of heresy, and if they had lived where Popery had been triumphant, would have been in danger of the Inquisition.

I fear many of these writers *speake lies in hypocrisy*, and come to weak and ignorant men *with all the deceivableness of unrighteousness*. This at least we may safely say without breach of charity, that we must not judge of the doctrine of the Romish church by the private opinions of a few of their doctors, but by the decrees of their Popes and Councils, and by the Catechisms which are taught among them with publick approbation.

But least any should think that we Protestants are enemies to good works, I shall in the fourth place

place suggest, what we hold concerning their nature and necessity. We readily own works truly good have an *intrinsic excellency* in them, and are highly pleasing and acceptable to God: Such as the duties of piety and devotion, justice and charity, temperance and sobriety. When they flow from a principle of faith in Christ, of love to God and duty, and are animated with the hope of the divine favour and acceptance, they are such sacrifices with which he is well pleased. They are instances of obedience to his command, and are our conformity to him in the moral perfections of his nature. They are profitable to our selves and others, and an ornament to our holy profession, and have a tendency to excite others, at the sight of them, to glorify our heavenly Father.

We also assert the *absolute necessity* of good works to our eternal salvation, both by the constitution of God, and in the reason of things, as they are a necessary qualification for our future blessedness. *Christ will come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them who know not God, and obey not the gospel. He will be the author of eternal salvation only to those that obey him. To them who by a patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour and immortality, he will give eternal life. They who do his commandments have a right to the tree of life. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Faith without works is dead, and can neither justify us here, nor save us hereafter.*

We also hold that good works are of a *rewardable nature*, and shall be rewarded with eternal life. God as the wise and gracious governor of the world has been pleased to annex the sanction of rewards and punishments to his holy laws. He promises to reward the obedient, and threatens to punish the disobedient, and we may safely depend upon his fidelity to these his promises and threatnings. You read of *the reward of the inheritance.*

*ritance.** The kingdom of heaven is given to children, therefore it's an inheritance; but it is given to obedient children as a reward. The apostle tells us, that every one shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.† We may say to good men as he does to the believing Hebrews.‡ God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which you have shewed to his name. Our Saviour, as the righteous judge, will give the crown of righteousness to those who have fought the good fight, who have finished their course, and kept the faith. It is the wisdom, holiness, and goodness of God, and not strict justice, that has settled the connection between the precept and the promise, the duty and the reward.

The same holds true concerning the proportion as well as the quality of the reward. There will be different degrees of reward as well as of punishment. *As one star differs from another star in glory, so it will be at the resurrection of the just. They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*§ *As a man sows so shall he also reap: He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly.* God in his infinite wisdom has seen fit to make such a connection as this; tho' the lowest degree of heavenly glory will be vastly more than a recompense for the best services, and the greatest sufferings of the present life; which shews that all is of grace, and not of merit; unless by *merit* we mean no more, than that it became the wisdom and holiness of God to make and fulfil such promises, and to settle such a connection between our duty and our reward; and then this will be chiefly a dispute about words. However, seeing the word merit has so proud a sound in the mouth
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* Col. iii. 24.

‡ Heb. vi. 10.

† 1 Cor. iii. 8.

§ Dan. xii. 3.

of a sinful creature, and has been and still is abused to serve very bad purposes, it is highly fit that it should be intirely dropt, and no pretences made to it.

Fifthly, That which we deny in this controversy is this: That the good works of the best of men do in their *own nature* and in point of *strict justice* deserve those rewards God has promised to them. We thankfully acknowledge that he will reward grace already received, and improved, with farther degrees of grace here, and with eternal life hereafter. *To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.* All this is of grace and not of debt; for there seems a contradiction in the very terms, to assert, as they do, that one degree of grace should merit another, since grace and merit are utterly inconsistent.

II. We come *Secondly* to prove, that the doctrine of the *merit of condignity* is the doctrine of the Romish church. The council of *Trent* (which was confirmed by the Pope, and is generally received as the standard of *modern Popery*;) asserts, * *That the good works of a justified person are not so the gifts of God, that they are not also the merits of the justified person; and that he being justified by the good works performed by him through the grace of God and merits of Jesus Christ, whose living member he is, does truly merit increase of grace, and eternal life;* and denounces an Anathema against those who hold the contrary. Here seems a strange mixture of truth and error, and a plain inconsistency in this their determination. † A learned prelate observes, that they speak so uncertainly of this point, as evidently shews they either knew not themselves what they would establish, or were unwilling others should know it: To serve some purposes

* Concil. Trid. Sess. 6. Can. 32.

† Archbishop Wake.

purposes they might have in view, they left these things in great darkness and confusion. But we may more easily judge of their sense by their after-writers, who were the great champions of the *Roman* cause, and who are not afraid to speak more plainly. Dr. *Allix* tells us, that *Vega*, who wrote his books of justification during the time he was at the council, maintains, that the council by truly meriting did understand meriting *de condigno*; and the doctors of the *Inquisition* did most evidently declare as much, when they expunged out of several books of their church such propositions as heretical, which denied the merit of good works. Let me give you an instance of this, which has been taken notice of by several * learned men: In the *Index Expurgatorius*, which was set out according to the order of the council, in the year 1584, the two following questions and answers, taken out of a publick office of their church, are ordered to be expunged.

Quest. Dost thou believe that thou shalt come to heaven, not by thy own merits, but by the virtue and merits of Christ's passion?

Ans. I do believe it.

Quest. Dost thou believe that Christ died for our salvation, and that none can be saved by their own merits, or any other way, but by the merits of his passion?

Ans. I do believe it.

How could these men, who pretend to believe the scriptures, without shame and blushing reject such questions and answers, as favouring of heretical pravity? No wonder they contend for another rule of faith besides the scripture, by which to judge of heresy; or else faith in Christ, and his merits as the only Saviour, which is one of the most clear and fundamental doctrines of the gospel, could never bear such a representation.

Maldonate

* *Usher, Stillingfleet.*

Maldonate the Jesuit also asserts, that we do as truly and properly, when we do well through God's grace, merit rewards, as we do deserve punishment when without this grace we do ill. If there be an inconsistency in these words, and one part contradict another, let the Jesuit be answerable for it. Another of their authors, *Andredius*, speaks to the same purpose, that eternal blessedness is no less due to the good works of good men, than eternal torments are to the evil works of wicked men; and that eternal life is so the recompense of good works, that it is not so much given of God freely, and out of liberality, as it is out of debt; and that the nature of merit and grace not being consistent, the reward is to be reckoned not of grace but of debt.* The famous cardinal *Bellarmino* expressly asserts, that our good works do merit *ex condigno* eternal life, and not only by reason of God's covenant, but also by reason of the work itself.† I shall mention but one more who goes yet farther. *Vasquez*, thinking that *Bellarmino* had attributed too little to good works, is not ashamed to assert, that those of just persons are of themselves without any covenant, or acceptation, worthy of the reward of eternal life, and have an equal value of condignity to the obtaining of eternal glory, and that there comes no accession of dignity to their works by the merits or person of Christ ---- and that tho' God's promise is annexed to the works of just men, yet it belongs no way to the merit of them, but cometh rather to the works themselves, which are not only worthy, but meritorious. From whence he draws this remarkable conclusion: Seeing the works of just men do merit eternal life as an equal recompense and reward, there is no need that any other condign merit, such as that of Christ's, should interpose, to the end that eternal life may be rendered to them: with more such vile stuff, that I shall not stay to transcribe

* See Mr. *Clarkson's* Morn. Exer. p. 407.

† *Bellar. de Just. Lib. 5. cap. 17.*

scribe or repeat. * Now if this were not the doctrine of the *Roman* church, we may well say, as the forementioned prelate does, we are a little surprized that no *Index Expurgatorius*, no authentick censure has ever taken notice of so dangerous a prevarication; but contrariwise these are the great authors of their party, approved, embraced, and almost adored by the greatest and most learned of that communion.

But besides this plain language of their most eminent writers, it is farther evident, that the doctrine of proper merit must be the doctrine of their church, since several of their other acknowledged doctrines do suppose, and are founded upon this. If no works are properly meritorious, then there can be no pretence for *works of supererogation*, nor for those pardons and indulgences which are given forth upon that supposition; and so the poor wretches will be cheated both of their pardon and money too, and by trusting to so broken a reed, will I fear be left to bear the punishment of their own sins. It's well known that the Papists pretend some of their saints have been, and are so very good, that they have merit more than sufficient for their own salvation; they have such a surplusage of it, as is a rich treasure laid up in the church, under the Pope's lock and key, which he gives forth, and transfers to others who can well pay for it. He is for engrossing the power of every thing, by which he can turn the penny, and make merchandise of the souls of men. But there is not the least foundation in scripture or reason for this kind of works, or the least hint how the merit of them can be transferred from one to another, or how the power of this comes to be lodged in the Pope's hand. They were the *foolish* virgins that desired the *wise* to give them of their oil, but *these* were too wise to part with any, lest they should not have enough for themselves and them.

* See *Wake's Expos. Doct. C. E.* pag. 22.

them. Our Saviour has taught us when we have done all to say : *We are unprofitable servants, and have done nothing but what was our duty to do.* Since then some of the gainful parts of Popery are founded on this doctrine of merit as well as that of purgatory, it is sufficiently evident, however some may mince the matter, that this is an avowed doctrine of their church.

I may further mention in proof of this, the matter of their private and publick devotions. How often do they join the merits of saints with those of our blessed Saviour, and plead the one as much as the other, as if they were upon a level ? Nay, if we may judge by the frequency of their devotions to the Virgin *Mary*, one would conjecture that they had a greater dependance on the Mother, than on the Son himself.--- If any should ask from whom did this proud doctrine take its rise, I answer, that tho' some of the fathers did use this word *merit*, yet not in the sense of the Popish writers. They mean no more by it, than we do by the rewardableness of good works, or that it's God's appointed way of obtaining eternal life : Or if any of them should mean more than this, they are not our rule of faith, we submit to no human authority, nor regard the sentiments of men any further than they are agreeable to the unerring word of God. A learned divine, Dr. *Clarkson*, thinks that the pedigree of this darling doctrine may be easily derived from the Pharisical *Jews*, from whom he says they have received a great part of their religion. The *Pharisees* were for infallibility, and of a magisterial imposing spirit in matters of conscience, before the Popes were born.

As for the doctrine of merit, *Camero* cites a passage out of *Maimonides*, where he says, *that every man hath his sins, and every man his merits, and he that hath more merits than sins, is a just man ; but he that hath more sins than merits is a wicked man.* And that

learned author is of opinion that St. *James* had an eye to this error of the *Pharisees*, when he tells us, that * *Who so ever offends against the law in one point is guilty of all.*

Notwithstanding all that I have said to prove that this doctrine of merit, since the council of *Trent*, is the established doctrine of the church of *Rome*, yet I deny not, but there are several persons in the visible communion of that church, who have juster thoughts of God and themselves, and more modesty and humility than to pretend to any merit in the sight of God. † Dr. *Allix* has fully proved that from the eleventh century to the beginning of the sixteenth, this was not the generally received doctrine of their church. Some of their Popes and canonised saints have spoken against it in as free terms, as we Protestants could do. What can I say to all this, but that if the corruptions of this church grow worse and worse; if they lead men into gross mistakes in matters of the last importance; then the entering into, and continuing in her communion, must be more and more unsafe and dangerous. Let us not *partake with her in her sins* and heresies, lest we *partake with her in her threatened plagues and judgments*. This change in her doctrine in one century from what it was in another, is a plain evidence how little just pretence she has to infallibility. If any should ask how it came so far to prevail, as at last to be established by the council of *Trent*, the author I just mentioned gives us this account of it: *Thomas Aquinas*, who lived in the middle of the thirteenth century, was one of the first who broached the doctrine of the merit of condignity. He maintains, that *because of the operation and grace of the Holy Spirit, wrought in the faithful, from whence good works do proceed, their good works do merit ex condigno*. This, as the Dr. observes, is so very weak a foundation, that one might naturally

* James ii. 10.

† See his Discourse of Merit.

ly draw from it a doctrine directly contrary to it; for if our works proceed from the grace of the Holy Spirit, we can merit nothing by them, the glory being due to him, and not to us. Notwithstanding this weak foundation, this man came afterwards to be advanced into the calendar of their saints, and his writings to be admired and adhered to by some of the orders of the church of *Rome*; and some that were great sticklers for him, got possessed of the *Inquisition*, and then they soon made use of this cruel and tyrannical power to crush all that contended with them in matters of religion. This being the case, what wonder this error did soon prevail, when the terrors of that hellish tribunal did threaten all that durst oppose it; especially when you consider that much about the same time the Monks got the power of hearing confessions, and directing the consciences of men, maugre all the opposition of the secular priests; they being in the interest of *Thomas Aquinas*, and designing to advance the merits, and so the wealth of their convents, took occasion, when in the *tribunal of penance*, to infuse this notion of merit into the minds of those who came to confession. By this means it spread in the *Roman* church, and as it laid the foundation for their gainful doctrines of indulgences and pardons, and they began to taste the sweetness of them, we can't wonder that the council of *Trent* established it, and anathematized all who should oppose it.

But whatever authority this doctrine may derive from that council, I come in the *Third* place to confute it, by shewing there is no ground for it in revelation or reason.

First, It is directly contrary to the plain and express declarations of scripture. How often are we told that *we are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.** And

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that

* Eph. ii. 8.

that not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saves us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. † When the apostle speaks of eternal life, as opposed to death, the change of the expression is very remarkable. *The wages of sin is death, ‡ but eternal life is the gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ:* and again, *Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.* § If our salvation be of grace, it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace; and if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work.** The best of men in scripture are represented as disclaiming all pretence to merit, when they have to do with an holy and righteous God. *Nehemiah* was an excellent governour, and did many things for the honour of God and the good of his church; yet he begs that God would spare him according to the greatness of his mercy. †† So *David* was an holy and devout prince, but yet he acknowledges, that if God should be strict to mark iniquity, he could not stand before him; and solaces himself in this thought, that there is forgiveness with God that he may be feared. ‡‡ *St. Paul* after his conversion was probably one of the best men that ever lived, and yet he speaks of himself as the least of all saints, and owns that it was by the Grace of God he was what he was. When he laboured more abundantly than the rest of the apostles, it was not he, but the grace of God that was with him. §§ The better men are, the more humble apprehensions they have of themselves; they are usually much in penitential confessions of sins, and earnest supplications for mercy: they are looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, and often begging that they may find mercy for themselves and others, in a dying day, and in the judgment day.

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† Tit. iii. 5.

‡ Rom. vi. 23.

§ Rom. v. 21.

** Rom. xi. 6.

†† Neh. xiii. 22.

‡‡ Psal. cxxx. 3, 4.

§§ 1 Cor. xv. 10.

I am not insensible that the *Romanists* sometimes bring scripture to support their doctrine of merit: But we may be as sure their interpretation cannot be the true sense, as we are that one place of scripture does not contradict another. Is eternal life sometimes called a *reward*? at another time it is called the *gift* of God, and therefore must be a reward of grace. Is it stiled a *crown of righteousness*, that is owing to the purchase of Christ, and to God's faithfulness to his promise, which is one branch of his justice or righteousness? But then it was grace that made the promise of so great a reward. Again, When saints are said to *walk with Christ, for they are worthy*, this worthiness is an evangelical, and not a legal one. It only denotes their qualification and meetness for the promised blessedness, and not their desert of it. These and many such like expressions declare the wisdom and holiness, grace and goodness, bounty and liberality of our merciful God and father, and not the merit of those who are thus favoured by him.

This will be further evident by considering, *Secondly*, the reason of things. None of the conditions and qualifications of merit are found in the best works of good men. I would illustrate this matter under a few particulars. *First*, It seems impossible to me *that any creature*, how excellent and glorious soever, should *merit* any thing at God's hand in a way of *commutative justice*, and that, because he is a creature. There may be merit between one creature and another, but there can be none between the creator and his creatures. The angels and arch-angels, seraphims and cherubims received their being and all their excellencies from God, and on him they depend for the continuance of them: the greater these are, and the more glorious the works are, which they are capable of performing, the greater is their obligation, honour and happiness. They are indebted to him, and not he to them.

They may be assured indeed from his wisdom, goodness and faithfulness, that he will never put a period to their being and blessedness, but where should be the injustice if he did? He would only recal what at first he freely gave, and was at liberty to continue a longer or shorter time, as it pleased him. These holy and excellent creatures are the most humble ones, and are represented in scripture in the lowest postures of adoration, as veiling their faces before God's throne, and casting their crowns down at his feet, ascribing blessing and honour and glory to his perfections, and not to their own merits. Now if these noble creatures, that have never sinned, have no pretences to merit, much less can such mean and sinful creatures as we are. For,

Secondly, We are so far from meriting, that we cannot *satisfy* divine justice for our past and daily offences. We are sinners both by nature and practice; in many things we often offend, and are taught by our blessed Saviour to pray for continual pardon. Now pardon and merit seem inconsistent. If our present and future obedience could be perfect and spotless, this would be no more than our indispensable duty, and could be no satisfaction to justice for sin; for the not running farther into debt is no payment of our old ones. How then can insolvent debtors pretend to merit? Nay, suppose our good works could be a satisfaction, it can be no meritorious act only to pay our just debts: But this is not the case with us. For,

Thirdly, There are *sinful defects* cleaving to our best duties, which will not bear the strict eye and inspection of God's impartial justice. There is that iniquity in our holy things, for which God might condemn us, if he should enter into judgment with us. Were it not for Christ's perfect atonement, and prevalent intercession, there would be no hope of audience and acceptance. They are
grossly

grossly ignorant of themselves, who reckon that their best works come up to the purity, spirituality, and extent of God's righteous law, for that reaches to the thoughts and intents of the heart, to the principles and ends as well as the matter of our actions. Who dare say, that he loves the Lord his God with all his heart, soul and strength, or that he ever performed one religious duty without any vain thought mixing with it? How numerous are the defects of our best graces and duties? All pretences to sinless perfection are the effects of pride and ignorance. *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.* We have not yet felt the power of gospel truth: *that* is the religion of sinners, and supposes us from first to last to be imperfect creatures. Integrity or uprightness of heart and life is the best perfection we can attain to; and it is our happiness that we are under such a dispensation of grace, as accepts of sincerity instead of legal perfection, as the term of life. Now since our best works cannot justify themselves at the bar of God's justice, how can they justify us before him, or merit anything at his hand.---Yet further,

The good that is done by us is not performed by our *own strength*, but by strength derived from above. The sinful defect of our works is from ourselves, but the goodness of them, by which they are pleasing to God, is from him. It's by his grace we are what we are, and what we do. We need both preventing and assisting grace to enable us to do anything that is spiritually good. *We have no sufficiency of our own, but all our sufficiency is of God. It is he that works in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.* We are also said to be *his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.* Now if we have *nothing but what we have received*, how unreasonable is it to boast as *if we had not received it*? Our adversaries themselves don't deny the assistance of grace: But how that which is the

effect of another's grace can be meritorious, is hard to understand, especially how it can merit of him, from whom the grace itself was received. That by which we merit ought in all reason to be our own, and not another's.

I add to this, that our best works can no way be *profitable to God*. Tho' we may rob him of his just rights by with-holding that homage and obedience which is his due, and tho' he is pleased to accept our sincere but imperfect services, yet it's impossible to be profitable to him, as one man is profitable to another, and as he who is wise is profitable to himself. Is it any pleasure to the almighty that thou art righteous, or is it any gain to him that thou makest thy way perfect? * If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him, or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him, or what receiveth he at thy hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man. Tho' our goodness may extend to our fellow creatures, to the saints that are in the earth, it cannot extend to God. His blessedness is so perfect and unchangeable, that it's not capable of any addition or diminution. Now in all proper merit, there is in some sense an exchange of benefit. Benefits are given for benefits received. There is a vast difference between the obedience and sufferings of our blessed Saviour, and our best services. Such was the dignity of his person, that he both could and did make reparation for the injury done to the honour of God's law and government, and opened a way for the display of his glorious perfections in our recovery and salvation. He therefore may be said truly to merit, tho' we cannot; for his sufferings were a valuable consideration for the blessings bestowed upon us. But such is our meanness and poverty, and his all-sufficiency and fulness, that proper merit can have no place on our part, in any of our transactions with him. Once

* Job. xxii. 2, 3. and xxxv. 6, 7, 8.

Once more, There is no *proportion* between our best works, and the rewards he has promised, either in point of *excellency* or *duration*. This there ought to be, if the former in strict justice did deserve the latter. How mean and poor are our best services! We work like ourselves, like weak and imperfect creatures, but the great God rewards like himself, as a free and noble benefactor, becoming the largeness of his bounty and liberality. Do we believe the gospel promises concerning the greatness and excellency of the heavenly glory, that it exceeds all present thought and expression, for *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man, what God hath prepared for them that love him?* Are we to behold his face in righteousness and to be satisfied with his likeness upon us; to be in his presence, where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore? And can we be so stupidly proud and ignorant as to think our sorry services are a valuable consideration for all this glory? How few are our good works, and of how short a continuance? If we began never so soon, and continued never so long, and suffered never so much in the service of God, all this would take in but the compass of a few years, whereas the promised reward is eternal and unchangeable. We are called by the God of all grace unto his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, and are begotten again to the lively hope of an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. What can be more evident than that neither the services nor sufferings of the present life are worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed.

Let me now in the *Fourth* place suggest a few of the pernicious consequences that attend the doctrine of merit, and are a just prejudice against it.

First, This tends to puff up the minds of carnal sinners with *spiritual pride*. Tho' our adversaries
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own in words the influence of grace, yet if we can so improve this grace as to merit eternal life at the hand of God, this thought will naturally elate the spirit, and gives ground for boasting, which in our fall'n state we are very subject to. We are poor and proud, too apt to think we are something, when we are nothing. Tho' pride was never made for apostate man, yet there are sad remains of it in all of us.

How prone are ignorant finners to trust to and depend on themselves, how gladly would they be their own saviour and happiness, and not be obliged to look out for something to recommend them to the divine favour and acceptance? The religion of Popery is too much the dictate of corrupt nature in all unrenewed men; but it's a temper abhorred of God, directly opposite to the true spirit of the gospel and the stated method of our recovery and salvation. Man fell by pride, and the first right step towards his restoration must be in deep humiliation and poverty of spirit; for *God resists the proud*. The poor Publican that smote upon his breast, saying, *God be merciful to me a sinner*, was justified before the proud Pharisee, that *thanked God he was not as other men*.

Secondly, This doctrine *derogates* from the *merits of Jesus Christ*. Tho' the Papists do not render them wholly useless and superfluous, yet as some of them represent the matter, they were only necessary to procure the first grace for us; for after that, they tell us we may merit for ourselves both increase of grace here, and eternal life hereafter. And is not this to set aside Christ and his merits, as of little use in the Christian life? Whereas we ought from first to last, *to live by the faith of the Son of God*, a life of constant dependance on on his satisfaction and mediation. To say, as some of them do, that Christ merited that we might merit, or that by his merits our good works become meritorious, is a
notion

notion to me altogether strange and unintelligible. I can easily apprehend how it may be consistent with the perfections of God's nature and government, to accept the weak and imperfect services of such imperfect creatures as we are, for the sake of Christ's perfect righteousness and atonement (and indeed I don't see how it would be becoming a righteous and holy God to accept of any thing but what was either perfect in itself, or for the sake of that which is so.) But how Christ's merits, which are without us, can make any intrinsic alteration in the works that are done by us, so that with them our works are meritorious, and without them are not, is what I cannot understand. They are intrinsically the same, whether we consider his merits or not. He merited for us, and is willing we should have the benefit of it; but it was never his design to make us our own Saviour; we ought to abhor every doctrine that derogates from the honour of our blessed Redeemer, and would set us upon a level with him.

Thirdly, This has a tendency to *mislead men*, in matters of the greatest moment and importance; for of that nature are the concerns of our eternal salvation. I fear those who conceit they have any meritorious works of their own, and trust in them, will be found to build upon the sand, and will meet with a fatal disappointment. It's true our adversaries own, that these works must be the effect of justifying grace; but I greatly question whether any who have felt the power of divine grace, or know the grace of God in truth, can believe their works are of a meritorious nature; for true grace humbles the soul, and lays it low in the sight of God. It's evident, as I have already hinted, that the works they lay the greatest stress on, are of little account with him; they are at best but the dead form and image of religion. How dangerous must it be for men to build their hope upon such a foundation

dation to the neglect of Christ, serious, vital and practical religion!

Fourthly, This notion *casts a damp upon* and destroys the hope of the most humble and serious Christians: They have that deep sense of their own imperfection, weakness and unworthiness, that if they were to have no more grace here or glory hereafter than what they could merit at the hand of God, they would soon lie down in sorrow and despair. Sometimes the number and aggravation of their sins are impressed with that weight upon their minds, that they find it difficult to believe there is grace enough in God, and merit enough in Christ to pardon and save them. However while they look upon eternal life as the gift of God and purchase of Christ, there are happy seasons when they entertain a lively prospect of it; but if it were to be their own purchase, they know so much against themselves, as would cut off all hope and expectation.

I shall only add, that the doctrine of merit *prepares the way*, and lays a foundation for several other Popish doctrines, which are of a pernicious nature; such as works of supererogation, pardons, and indulgences, and the like. If we can't merit for ourselves, much less can we merit for others, by doing more than is necessary for our own salvation. What then will become of the stock of merit in the treasury of the church, which, as you have heard, the Pope gives out upon several occasions to those who have no merit of their own, and can pay for it? Tho' the loss of these doctrines would be a manifest prejudice to his Holiness, and the whole army of Monks and Friars that have a dependance on him, yet I believe it will be no real detriment to the souls of men.

It's more than time that I should subjoin a few things upon the other part of my subject, concerning the nature of a sinner's justification before God.

This

This is a doctrine of great importance in the Christian religion, which was very much darkened, and obscured, and perverted by the Papists before the Reformation. Their doctrine of human satisfaction and penances had a tendency either to distress the consciences of awakened sinners, or to lay them asleep by dangerous opiates, instead of leading them to the blood of Christ, the only healing balsam for a wounded spirit. After what I have already said of their doctrine of merit, I need not be large here; for if no works of ours, internal or external, are perfect and meritorious, they can never be the ground of our justification before God. The Papists seem to me to confound sanctification with justification. Tho' they mention the righteousness of Christ, and the remission of sins as necessary ingredients in our justification, yet they make our own inherent righteousness and good works as necessary a part of it, which seems to set them upon a level with Christ's righteousness and God's pardoning mercy. The council of Trent defines justification to be *not only remission of sins, but the sanctification and renovation of the inner man, and makes the only formal cause of our justification to be that righteousness of God by which he makes us righteous, and by which we are renewed in the spirit of our mind.* * This council, which is much more free in enforcing her decrees and canons with a solemn curse than with solid reason, pronounces an anathema against any who shall say that *men are justified either by the alone imputation of Christ's righteousness, or only by the remission of sins, excluding grace and charity, which is diffused in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, and inheres in them; or that the grace by which we are justified is only the favour of God.* This at best is a very perplex'd and confus'd account
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* Con. Trid. Sess. 6. cap. 7. can. 11.

of this important matter, and is apt to lead the ignorant and injudicious into dangerous mistakes.

I am unwilling needlessly to multiply verbal disputes, and therefore freely acknowledge that the word we translate *justify* may signify *to make one just*, and in some few places of scripture may admit this sense: but it's more commonly taken in a *forensic* and judicial sense, and not in a *moral* one: to be justified is to be accounted and treated as a righteous person, and not to be made inherently so. It's opposed to condemnation, and includes in it pardon of sin, and a right to life.---We also own the *necessity* of sanctification as well as justification. We need the spirit of Christ to renew our natures, as well as his blood to expiate our guilt. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Only the pure in heart shall see God. The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* The heavenly inheritance belongs only to those who are *sanctified by faith in Christ Jesus*. It is the *inheritance of the saints in light*. We also affirm that justification and sanctification are two invaluable blessings that always go together. None are justified but at the same time they are sanctified. *Christ is made of God to them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.* We read of being *washed, justified and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God*. If we speak only of *initial* sanctification, it's the same thing for substance with faith and repentance, regeneration and conversion, and is antecedently necessary to our pardon and acceptance. But if by it we mean *progressive* mortification and holiness, our dying more and more to sin and living unto righteousness, then its consequent on our justification, and is the best evidence of our being in a justified state.

Notwithstanding these concessions, we still assert that the scriptures speak of justification and sanctification

fication as *two* very distinct and different privileges of the covenant of grace. The one removes the guilt of sin, and so our obligation to punishment; the other, as far as it prevails, removes the power and pollution of it: tho' it be imperfect at first, it is or should be of a progressive nature. The one is God's gracious act towards us, the other is his good work in us. The one causes a change in relation to God and his righteous law, the other a real change in the temper and disposition of the soul.

In order to set this matter in a little more clear and distinct light, I shall suggest the following things.

First, To justify is the *act* of God as our righteous governor and judge, and not as he is the author of inherent grace. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? * It is God that justifies. It is the same God that justifies the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith.* None but that God, against whom sin is most immediately committed, can remit the penalty of his own violated law. He claims this as his prerogative. *I, even I am he who blotteth out thy transgressions for my own name sake.* He promises to be merciful to our unrighteousness, and our sins and iniquities to remember no more. His perfections are frequently celebrated and adored upon this account. *Who is a God like unto thee, pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin?* It's he that in the gospel covenant has settled the terms of forgiveness, or the way and method of finding acceptance with him; and when we sincerely comply with these, he by the same gospel, as his instrument, constitutes and pronounces us to be in a justified state. He treats us as such persons now, and will declare us such by the sentence of our final judge in the great day. The gospel is the rule of judgment. Those who are absolved or condemned by it now, shall be absolved or condemned by Christ

Christ in that awful day. In vain are we justified by our selves or others, if he condemn us; for *he that judges us is the Lord*, and there is no appeal from that Tribunal.

Secondly, The only meritorious cause of our justification is the perfect righteousness and atonement of Christ. He trod the wine-press of his father's wrath alone, and of the people there was none with him. He is a compleat Saviour, nothing must be joined with him in point of satisfaction and merit: he will not endure to have any thing in the creature set in competition or co-ordination with him. If he may not be our only Saviour, he will be no Saviour to us. How clear, full, and numerous are the scripture declarations upon this head? As by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many are made righteous. As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all unto justification of life. We are said to be justified through the redemption that is in Christ, and to have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin, and to be justified by his blood. God having set him forth a propitiation, through faith in his blood, declares his righteousness for the remission of sins, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. † He is made of God to us righteousness, as well as sanctification, and is the Lord our righteousness, in whom we have both righteousness and strength. He who knew no sin, was made sin, or a sin-offering for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. ‡ It was the sin and ruin of the Jews, that being ignorant of the righteousness of God, or of this way of justification appointed by God, they went about to establish a righteousness of their own, not submitting*

* Rom. v. 18, 19.

† Rom. iii. 24, 25. Eph. i. 7.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 21.

*submitting themselves to the righteousness of God. ** It's evident the gospel justification is not that of innocent creatures, for we can't deny the charge of guilt that is brought against us. We are all sinners before God. Nor are we justified by a mere act of arbitrary grace, for the promises of forgiveness are founded upon a foregoing satisfaction made to the justice of God for sin by the sufferings and death of Christ. Hence his blood is stiled † *the blood of the everlasting covenant*, and *all the promises are in him, yea and amen to the glory of God. ‡* Christ's righteousness and atonement must be pleaded by those who are interested in it, in bar to their condemnation, and as their right and title to pardon and favour. *Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea rather is risen again. He was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification, and now there is no condemnation to them that are in him.* This leads me to add,

Thirdly, Faith in Christ is the appointed means of obtaining an interest in his atonement, and so is the condition of our actual justification. The ground and foundation of this glorious privilege, and the way and means of interest in it, are two very different things. The former must be attributed to Christ's righteousness, and to that alone; the latter to a vital and operative faith. The atonement in this way must be received before we can joy in God, as our reconciled God. *They who believe not are condemned already, ** and the wrath of God abides upon them.* We frequently read of *being justified by faith*, and of *the righteousness of God by faith*, and of *faith being imputed to us for righteousness*. Christ was offered up a propitiatory atoning sacrifice on the cross for sin, in our room and stead. This sacrifice has been accepted of the Father on our behalf. Upon our sincere compliance with the terms

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* Rom. x. 3.

‡ 2 Col. i. 20.

† Heb. xiii. 20.

** Rom. vii. 1. iv. 22.

of the gospel, we are interested in it, and receive saving advantage by it. It's by faith that awakened convinced sinners flee for refuge to the hope set before them.

The faith that justifies is neither a dead notion in the head, nor a groundless confidence and persuasion that our sins are pardoned, and we are in a justified state: But it's a cordial acceptance of Christ in all his offices, and a resignation to him as Lord Redeemer. It's a *faith that works by love*, that *purifies the heart*, is our *victory over the world*, and is productive of gospel obedience. St. Paul * and St. James do not really contradict each other, when the one says, *Abraham was justified by faith, and not by works*, and the other that *he was justified by works and not by faith only*.† Paul does not speak of the same kind of works that James does, nor James of the same kind of faith that Paul does. St. James's works are such as flow from a vital principle of faith, but St. Paul's are the works of the law, such as were done without faith, and such as were trusted to as meritorious in the sight of God, and so substituted in the room of Christ and his righteousness. In like manner the faith St. James speaks of is only a dead notion, whereas that of St Paul's is a vital principle, productive of gospel holiness and obedience. But neither our faith or best works have any part in that which belongs to the Redeemer's office, much less must any pretended human satisfactions and merit, mix with his merit and atonement.

From this account of justifying faith, we see how unsafe and dangerous the Popish doctrine of sacramental justification must be. Bishop Burnet in his exposition of the thirty-nine Articles takes notice how very lax their notions in this respect are. His words are these: *That the use of the sacraments, if men do not put a bar to them, and if they have only imperfect*

* Rom. iv. 2, 3.

† James ii. 24.

imperfect acts of sorrow accompanying them, does so far compleat those weak acts as to justify us. This he justly reckons among the most mischievous of all their practical errors, as it tends to enervate all religion, and to make the sacraments of the nature of a charm, which if they can be come at, though with ever so slight a preparation, will make up all defects. Thus those ordinances that were given us to raise and heighten our repentance and faith, are substituted in the room of them, and become engines to encourage sloth and impenitency.---- I shall only add,

Fourthly, That the *ultimate design* of God in our justification, is, the displaying and magnifying the *freeness* and *riches* of his own grace. Hence we read of being *justified by his grace*, and that *we have redemption through his blood, according to the riches of his grace*; and that it *is of faith*, that it might be *by grace*. The whole contrivance is admirably adapted to advance this divine perfection. It was *grace* that did admit of a substitute in our room and stead, for God might in strict justice have insisted upon our suffering the punishment of sin in our own persons. It's *grace* that has provided and accepted the ransom for us, that has constituted the new covenant, and settled the connection between sincere repentance and faith on the one hand, and pardon and justification on the other; and it's *grace* that enables us to comply with the reasonable terms proposed; so that the *grace* of God is as free and rich as is consistent with the other perfections of his nature and government. If we were to be justified by our own works, and these were perfect and meritorious, we should have wherewith to glory in ourselves; whereas God will have no flesh to glory in his sight and presence, but *he that glorieth must glory in the Lord*. In Christ alone shall *all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory*. Thus have I given you a summary account of what

I take to be the substance of the Protestant doctrine of justification; and as far as it differs from the Popish doctrine, we have clearly the language of scripture on our side. This account does most effectually advance the honour of divine grace, and of the Redeemer's merit, and is most for the relief and comfort of awakened convinced sinners. ---- I shall assist your improvement of this subject in a few words of advice, and so conclude.

Be very *thankful* for the *Reformation* from Popery, and that you live in those times and places where it prevails. When serious and inquisitive Christians were allowed the free use of the scriptures, they soon got much clearer light into this, and several other important doctrines, than they ever had before. *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Take heed lest being led away by the error of the wicked, you fall from your own steadfastness. Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* The more you know of him, and of his infinite fulness and merit, the more you will abhor the principles of Popery, which are a vile usurpation of his rights, honour, and dignity.

Let Protestants make it evident, that they are as much *friends to good works* as the Papists can be, and do as much abound in them. Tho' we dare not trust to them as the meritorious cause of our pardon and acceptance here, and of eternal life hereafter, yet they are the best evidences of our present pardon, and the qualifications of our final blessedness. Where the love of God and man doth really rule in the heart, it will make men more truly charitable and beneficent, than any proud conceit of merit can do. Let not the professors of a false religion outdo you in works of substantial piety and goodness. *Let the rich in this world be rich in good works, ready to distribute, wil-*
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ling to communicate, feed the hungry, cloath the naked, and in this way cause their light to shine before men. It will be our shame and reproach, if any should be under a temptation to exchange the Protestant religion for Popery, as the more kind and compassionate religion of the two. But then,

When you have done your best, own yourselves to be *unprofitable servants*. Fly to the blood of Christ, and the mercy of God in him, for pardon and acceptance. That you may never be tempted to place an undue confidence in any of your own duties, endeavour to be better acquainted with God and yourselves. Study more the purity and extent of his righteous law. Frequently compare your hearts and lives with it. Bring yourselves often before the bar of your own conscience; if that condemn you, how will you bear God's enlightened tribunal? Keep death and judgment much in your view: In the serious thought and approach of that awful day, you will be convinced you need something better than your own merits to trust to and depend on. *Bellarmino* himself could say, that it was *safest*, considering our manifold defects, to trust to Christ's righteousness. Now that which is safest to die by, must be the safest to live by. He may justly reject those at death, who neglect him in the time of life. Whatever others may say or do, let us all abide by this, as an undoubted truth, that *it is grace which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord*. To whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen*.

The popish doctrine of PURGATORY repugnant to the Scripture account of remission through the blood of CHRIST.

A
S E R M O N

PREACH'D AT

Salters-Hall, March 27, 1735.

By J. EARLE, D. D.

I JOHN i. 7.

---The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

I Find this text made use of by antient and modern Protestants as an argument against the Popish doctrine of purgatory: and I think it affords such a one as cannot be fairly answered. I have therefore chosen it for the foundation of what I have to offer upon the head assign'd me; and propose to discourse from it in the following method.

I. I would represent the true sense and proper import of the words.

II. Shew what is the *Romish* doctrine of purgatory.

III. Argue against it from it's repugnancy to the scripture doctrine of cleansing from sin by the blood of Christ, as before represented.

IV. Answer what may be objected against the conclusiveness of the argument proposed.

I. I would fairly state the true sense and import of the words.

1. By the *blood of Christ*, we are to understand his death, which was the natural consequence of shedding his blood. And by this manner of expressing our Lord's death is signify'd his dying as an expiatory sacrifice, and so answering the types exhibited in the law of *Moses*; concerning which the author of the epistle to the *Hebrews* speaks very fully, and particularly in the ninth chapter, to which I refer you.

2. By the *cleansing* here attributed to the blood of Christ is meant directly and immediately a *sacrificial purgation*. I do not exclude a moral one as consequent upon it: for no doubt we owe our whole salvation to the *precious blood of Christ*, who was deliver'd up to death for us as a *lamb without blemish and without spot*, that he might *redeem us from our vain conversation*, 1 Pet. i. 19. He gave himself for us that he might *redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works*, Titus ii. 14. His blood *purgeth the conscience from dead works, that we may serve the living God*, Heb. ix. 14. Thus our hearts are purify'd by faith, and Christ is of God made to us *sanctification*, Acts xv. 9. 1 Cor. i. 30.

But I say the expression in the text seems *directly* to import a *sacrificial purgation* or being pardon'd by way of atonement, or in view to an expiatory sacrifice;

crifice; such a forgiveness of sins as is a cleansing from all unrighteousness by the blood of the Son of God; upon which account God is represented as faithful and just in thus forgiving, ver. 9. according to that of St. Paul, Rom. iii. 26. *That he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.* However, the cleansing spoken of in the text, and the next verse but one, must I think refer to the remission of sin, because the expressions have a plain reference to a sacrifice. And these places in St. John are parallel to that of the author to the Hebrews, ix. 14. Where the blood of Christ is said to purge the conscience from dead works. This the marginal references of the *Vulgate* shew to be the sense of the *Romish* divines. And very justly; for it is the same phraseology in both epistles, and the sense of it is very evidently sacrificial in that to the Hebrews. For, as Dr. Whitby observes, “ τὸ καθαρίζειν “ here, as the comparison clearly shews, being in “ sense the same with ἀγιάζειν in the verse preceding, “ must signify the cleansing of the conscience not “ from the inclination to sin, by the Holy Spirit, but “ from the guilt of sin, by the blood shed for the “ remission of it. And, saith he, this is the constant sense of the word καθαρίζειν in the Old Testament, when join’d with ἀπὸ ἀμαρτιῶν. Hence then “ it follows, that the dead works from which their “ conscience was to be thus cleansed must signify “ works which deserved death, &c.”

Thus I understand these words as expressing what we have in many other places of scripture, which it is not at present necessary to mention.---It may be sufficient to refer you to that of St. Paul, Eph. i. 7. *In whom we have redemption thro’ his blood, the forgiveness of sins.* Of this forgiveness I take St. John here to speak.

3. The persons thus said to be cleansed or forgiven their sins, are no doubt, believers, all that are truly so, who with the heart believe. According to that
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of St. Paul, Rom. x. 10. *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness. Remission of sins is thro' faith in Christ's blood,* Rom. iii. 25. And the righteousness of God is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all, and whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins, Acts x. 43. So chap. xiii. 38, 39. Be it known to you therefore, men and brethren, that thro' this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justify'd from all things, &c. i. e. all true believers, whose character is, that they walk in the light, and not in darkness, and prove their faith by their works; for we deny a dead faith to be justifying, whatever our enemies may pretend.

This doctrine of the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ, upon faith professed in baptism, was always an article of the Christian creed. I say for the sake of Christ, "Unto which consideration" (says the learned author of the critical History of the Creed) the water in baptism, and the washing our bodies therewith, directs us; since it is impossible the sprinkling of that should purge away the stain and guilt of sin in any other way and manner than as it hath reference to, and is a representation of the blood of the Lamb of God, which was spilt to take away the sins of the world. For water under the evangelical dispensation is in itself no more available to the purging of the conscience, and the pacifying divine wrath, than the blood of bulls and goats was under the *Mosaical* and legal œconomy." p. 369.

The persons thus cleansed, I say, are true believers, such as believe with the heart, and make a free profession of their faith, and live answerably to it. Of these it is said,

4. That the blood of Christ cleanseth them from all sin, all manner of sin, as it is expressed Matt. xii. 13. excepting only the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,

Ghost, which is inconsistent with faith in Christ. By him all that believe are *justified from all things*: all sins of whatever kind or degree, and however circumstanced and distinguished; whether committed before that faith whereby we are justified, or after it. The forgiveness of all and all manner of sins before men's conversion to God by Christ, was never denied (that I can find) by any professed Christians. But besides, all sins committed after *the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*, tho' never so scandalous and offensive, are, upon renewal of faith and repentance, pardonable both by God and the church. This indeed was deny'd by the *Novatians*, who declared, "that there was no mercy for them who should fall after baptism," at least, "that the church could not forgive them," and receive them into communion again, but "must forever exclude them her society, and leave them to the judgment of God." In opposition to which opinion the article of forgiveness of sins is thought to have been added to the creed in the time of *St. Cyprian*. See *Crit. Hist.* p. 360.

Now this scripture doctrine, own'd by the primitive doctors of the church, whom we call *Fathers*, is the doctrine of the Reformed or *Protestant* churches, viz. That to true believers all their sins are freely forgiven by God, upon the account of the sacrifice which Christ offer'd when he died by shedding his blood on the cross, and which he ever lives to plead in their behalf. Thus it is said, that *the blood of Jesus Christ the son of God cleanseth from all sin*.

II. I am next to shew what the *church of Rome* teaches upon this head or article of the forgiveness of sins. And here, to do her justice, she does own,

I. That

1. That Christ did *die for our sins according to the scripture*; that his blood is infinitely meritorious; and even say, that one drop of his blood is sufficient to redeem mankind,----whatever they mean by it-----

2. That all true believers, for the sake of Christ's meritorious death, are deliver'd from eternal death, and have a sure title to everlasting life.

3. They say, that such as die immediately upon their baptism, and all that suffer martyrdom, and such as are fully purged before death, go directly to heaven, and enjoy the beatifical vision, not waiting for it till the day of judgment.

4. But they pretend, that such as die guilty of lesser sins, which they call *venial*, before they have repented for these ordinary failings; and such as having been formerly guilty of greater sins, have not made full atonement for them to the divine justice; that such must go to *purgatory*: which, they tell us, is a middle state of souls which depart this life in God's grace, yet not without some lesser stains or guilt of punishment, which retards them from entering into heaven. (I give you this account in the very words of a little piece, which is industriously spread about at present, called a *Profession of Catholick Faith*, &c.)

5. Tho' the particular place where these souls suffer, or the quality of the torments which they suffer, be not decided by the church, yet it is owned they do suffer, and are in torment; nay the catechism set out by order of the council of *Trent*, calls it a **purgatory-fire*; and some of their allowed doctors represent the sufferings there, as caused by the *same fire as torments the damned in hell*: yea *Belarmine* owns, that almost all their divines teach, *that the damned and the souls in purgatory are tormented in the same fire, and in the same place.*

6. They

6. They do not pretend that these sufferings are for their *moral* purification, (as the afflictions of this life are allowed to be) but for their cleansing in a way of *satisfaction* to the justice of God. So they mean by purgatory, not (as one wou'd at first hearing it imagine, and perhaps many mistakingly apprehend) a place or state in which the remainders of vitious habits or wrong inclinations are to be worn out or purged away---for this they absolutely deny ---but a place in which they are not to repent or be amended, but to satisfy; and their purgatory-fire purges the conscience from venial sins, (and some remainder of the guilt of mortal ones too) as the blood of Christ does from *dead works*; that is, makes satisfaction for them to the justice of God.

7. They say, that souls in this distress are helped by the suffrages of the faithful; that is, by the prayers and alms offered for them, and principally by the holy sacrifice of the mass, (this is the account given by the forementioned author) and Papal indulgences, &c.

8. They make this doctrine (for the substance of it) an article of faith, and enforce it with an anathema, *i. e.* curse those that do not believe it, or at least all that have the courage to say they do not. For thus runs the 30th *canon* of the sixth *session* of the *council* of *Trent*. “ If any shall say, that after
 “ receiving the grace of justification, any peni-
 “ tent sinner has his fault so forgiven, and the guilt
 “ of eternal punishment taken away, that there
 “ remains no guilt of temporal punishment to be dis-
 “ charged either in this world, or that to come, in
 “ purgatory, before he can enter into the kingdom
 “ of heaven, let him be accursed.”

Thus I have given you a brief account of that purgatory, which the church of *Rome* obliges her people to believe upon pain of damnation. I am now

III. To argue against it from its *repugnancy* to the *scripture doctrine* of cleansing from sin by the blood of Christ, as before proposed: of which you have heard more largely in a late discourse of being justified freely by the grace of God, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ. Which is not only a truth, but an essential article of the Christian faith. See *Rom. x. 3. 1 Cor. xv. 3. Gal. v. 4.* Now to shew the opposition of this doctrine of purgatory to that of justification by the free grace of God in Christ, I shall observe several things.

(1.) This doctrine derogates from those *perfections of God*, which in the work of redemption by Christ he designed to magnify----as

1. His *goodness, grace, and mercy.* This was it that moved him *not to spare his own Son, but deliver him up for us all*, *Rom. viii. 32.* Thus *Ephes. i. 6, 7.* *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved: In whom we have redemption thro' his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace. Herein God commendeth his love to us, that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us*, *Rom. v. 8.* So *1 John iv. 10.* *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

Now what a reflection is it upon the love and grace of God, that after such a propitiation has been made, and such a satisfaction given, he should insist upon the sufferings of those, who *by faith in Jesus Christ are all his children*; and those too so terrible ones, and so long as may, for ought the patrons of purgatory can tell, amount to ten thousand times more than ever what all the saints upon earth suffer'd in the flesh comes to. Does this consist with the account we have even in the *Old Testament*, of his being the *Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity,*
and

and transgression, and sin? *Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.* Do we not read of his being gracious, and full of compassion, slow to anger, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy? *Psal. cxlv. 8. lxxxvi, 5.* Are we not told, that he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men? *Lam. iii. 33.* How moving are those expressions, *Hos. xi. 8.* *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together!* Does God express himself so tenderly when his poor creatures are exposed to temporal judgments, and give reason for that exclamation of the prophet, *How great is his goodness?* *Zech. ix. 17:* And can we imagine that those who are reconciled to him by the death of his Son, and justify'd by his blood, can be tormented by him in a future state after so terrible a manner? In the *New Testament* we are told, that *God is love,* *1 John iv. 16.* And is it to be thought he will so severely correct his children; *not for their good:* for the Papists do not pretend there is any spiritual improvement in purgatory: but merely *to receive satisfaction* for their faults; yea such “small faults as the best of his servants are more or less liable to:” * and that after his dear Son had *born their sins in his own body on the tree?* Is this the idea the church of *Rome* would give us of him who *is good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works?* *Psal. cxlv. 9.* Is this consistent with what we are told, that *like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him?* Do earthly parents, that have any bowels or understanding, deal thus with their children? Or if some times they do, can it be supposed that our heavenly Father is such a one as they are? Good God! what difference do these people make between thee, and those *fathers of the flesh*, who correct their children *after their own pleasure!*

* *Protest. p. 34.*

I am well aware that the *goodness* of God is not to be impeach'd, *merely* because he punishes. But then I am also as sure as I can be of any thing, that he never afflicts but when the case necessarily requires it, or the affliction may turn to the sufferer's account; neither of which can be the case in this purgatory-fire. God *may*, without any derogation from his more awful attributes, omit to exact any thing from those for whom Christ died, by way of satisfaction, and therefore surely he *will*. And as for any benefit arising to the sufferers in purgatory, the *Papists* do not pretend to it; they own they cannot there merit, nor be improved. What benefit may arise from their sufferings to the *temporalities* of the church is another thing; but (I am desirous it should be noted and remembred) to the poor wretches in that place of torment no benefit can accrue from their being there: And therefore as neither the honour of God's perfections and government require it, nor their own advantage, I must again say, it seems inconsistent with that benignity of the divine nature, which he has taught us so much to magnify.

2. This doctrine derogates from the *wisdom* of God, which he design'd to magnify in the work of redemption thro' his Son's blood; *wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence*. Eph. i. 8. I know the turn given to this text by some writers. But a *commentator, who is in every body's hands, in his notes upon it, has said a good deal to shew the wisdom of this dispensation of God in sending his Son into the world to suffer for our sins, and by his sufferings to make an atonement for them. I shall only refer you to him, and take it for granted at present; especially seeing the patrons of purgatory do not deny, that the doctrine of Christ crucified is the *power* of God and his *wisdom* too, 1 Cor. i. 24. Upon which place their own *Estius* faith

* Dr. *Whitby* in loc.

faith, “ which [wisdom] he [God] shew’d, in
 “ that he redeemed his elect by the humiliation and
 “ death of Christ.”

Now is it to the reputation of any wisdom, to use means that are wholly needless to answer the ends in view, and without which they could be every whit as well reach’d? Is not making satisfaction to the justice and law of God the end of Christ’s shedding his blood? Is not that a sufficient atonement, and every way adapted to the purpose of expiation, without the aid of any other method of satisfaction? I hope this will not be denied by those who have spoken so magnificently of *one single drop* of the precious blood which our Lord shed. What, is not the blood of God a plenary satisfaction? The church of *Rome* holds the full and proper divinity of our blessed Saviour; and upon that principle can they think it not enough, that he *was made sin*, [*a sin-offering*] *for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, 1 Cor. v. 21. but after all, we must satisfy for ourselves in purgatory-fire? Let me desire them to consider, whether this does not highly reflect upon the wisdom of God, that he should *lay upon his Son the iniquity of us all*, and then make us either bear a great deal of our own burthen, or commute for it with *trifles*. I say *trifles*, for so are all the equivalents which the espousers of purgatory propose.

Men may be helped *there*, it seems, (and therefore to be sure may be kept *from thence*) “ by the suffrages of the faithful, that is by the prayers and alms offered for them :” That is, in short, by giving money to the church and its poor : and principally by the sacrifice of the Mass, which the priest must be well paid for offering.---I do not call prayers and alms a trifle *absolutely* ; but when they pretend to come in aid of the perfect sacrifice, which Christ made, they are *worse* than trifles. As for the sacrifice of the mass, we must take leave to treat that in

no other manner, till they have proved their famous doctrine of Transubstantiation. Otherwise, surely, saying a few *Latin* words over a piece of bread and a cup of wine, and presenting them before an altar, is too mean a thing to serve the purposes it pretends to answer.

Would a wise man, when he has received all proper and reasonable satisfaction for an offence, insist upon what can serve no manner of purpose? And can we think the wisdom of God will permit him to demand, beside a full price which he has received from his Son, an addition of things which cannot increase the sum a single mite? Is this the notion these men have of the *only wise God*?

3. This doctrine of purgatory carries in it a reflection upon the *justice* of God. If any thing could be added to the price with which we are bought, can justice insist upon it, when he has accepted the ransom? He might have chosen whether he would admit a substitution or vicarious punishment: and he had a right to insist upon such limitations as were proper in order to sinners having the benefit of such a dispensation. This he has done in settling the covenant of grace, which is called the *everlasting covenant*, and is ratify'd in the Redeemer's blood. The sum of which is, that all true believers shall be saved from wrath, and live for ever, *John* iii. 16. *Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.* Now of the satisfaction which Christ made, under the limitations agreed to, God has declared his approbation and acceptance by raising Christ from the dead, and sending forth his spirit to confirm the testimony of his ambassadors, *to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses*, 2 Cor. v. 19. And it follows, *ver. 21. For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* And all this without any limitation, but this, that they

believe and profess, and *walk in the light*, i. e. be holy in heart and life. Not one word is said of believers making satisfaction for themselves in a *middle state*. We are assured that *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*. Rom. viii. 1. And therefore justice itself can require nothing more beside what was stipulated. So that I say, the very justice of God itself, which was design'd to be honour'd by this dispensation, is flurr'd by representing him as making farther demands. We are bought with a price which our Redeemer has paid, and the payment of it solemnly acknowledged, and accepted in the behalf of all his living members, who bring forth fruit unto God: And can justice demand more? If it be no wrong to us, surely it would be injurious to his Son, with whom no *doubt* a righteous God will keep covenant; and it would be injustice not to do it.---- But this leads me to observe, that,

4. This doctrine flurs the divine *truth* and sincerity. God is a *God of truth*; and in the sufferings of his Son, he fulfilled the promise made to the fathers. All the promises of forgiveness under the Old Testament, had surely a reference to the Messiah, (as no man can doubt, that reads the 53d of *Isaiah*.) Now how full and strong do they run! *Forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin*. Transgression is said to be forgiven, sin cover'd, iniquity not imputed, *Psal. xxxii. 1. With the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities, cxxx. 7, 8. Tho' their sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, tho' they be red like crimson they shall be as wool, Isa. i. 18. He will have mercy; he will abundantly pardon, lv. 7.* We read of the greatness and multitudes of his tender mercies. *I will, saith God, forgive their iniquities, and remember their sin no more, Jer. xxxi. 34.* And in the prophet *Micah, vii. 18, &c.* (who foretold where Christ

Christ should be born) we have a strong passage, *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever; because he delighteth in mercy; he will turn again; he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.* And then it follows, *Thou wilt perform thy truth to Jacob.* (I hope the Papists will bear with this profusion of quotations out of the Old Testament, since they make use of so many in defence of their purgatory-fire.) Now, *Rom. iii. 4. Let God be true, but every man a liar.* Accordingly, now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe, &c. 21, 22. *What said the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Nor was it written for his sake alone, but for us also, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus from the dead, who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification, Rom. iv. 23. Those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled, Acts iii. 18.*

Now if God had promised an absolute and plenary forgiveness of sin thro' Christ, to all that believe, repent and are converted, (ver. 19.) does it not reflect upon his faithfulness, if when the affair comes forth, there appears such a reserve as was never taken notice of in the original declaration of grant, nor specified in the actual conveyance. If the gospel, after its publication by those to whom God bare witness, be declared to be according to the tenor of the ancient evangelical promises to the fathers, without specifying any alteration; does this do honour to God's truth and sincerity, if it appears that there was a limitation

unknown and unthought of by the church of old, and not plainly signified upon the opening a new dispensation?

And this seems by the way, to be a special hardship upon believers under this new dispensation, that they are liable to the torments of purgatory-fire, which our adversaries will not say was prepar'd for the Old Testament saints: There having been, it seems, a *Limbus* appointed for them; in which, according to the account they give of the matter, there was no torment.

So that in short the doctrine of purgatory seems to be contrary to all our notions of the mercy, wisdom, justice and faithfulness of God, which he designed to honour in the gospel salvation.

(2.) Farther, this doctrine is *dishonourable to Christ*, who is, by his all-cleansing blood, *the propitiation for our sins*, 1 John ii. 2. St. John tells us, that *all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*, v. 23. The proper and full divinity of the Son is not deny'd by the church of Rome. So that any doctrine derogatory to him is equally criminal as if it concern'd the Father. Now the apostle Paul, (whom the council of Trent makes the author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*) tells us, that Christ has by himself purged our Sins, i. 3. That he *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, ix. 26. That *by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*, x. 14. i. e. "completely expiated" the sins of them that are sanctified thro' faith "in his blood, procuring the remission of sins."* And of this, saith he, the *Holy Ghost also is a witness*; for after he had said before, *This is the covenant*, &c. he adds, *Their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more*, ver. 15, 16, 17.

Therefore any other methods of expiation pretended to are a reflection upon the atonement which

* *Whitby* in loc.

which Christ made as insufficient. And I would intreat the Romanists to consider whether *his* blood is not sufficient to cleanse from all sin, without the torments of purgatory, or the poor equivalents that are to supersede them. They and we agree in being amaz'd at it as infinite condescension, that God should be manifested in the flesh, and in that flesh bear our sins in order to their expiation: and can it enter into our minds, that the atonement *he* made should not of itself answer all purposes to true Christians, without there being any manner of room for the merits of *sinners*, (for so all the saints in their best estate on earth were) in order to our deliverance from that torment by which they must otherwise expiate their own offences?

Is this honouring Christ to tell us of a state of torment, which those for whom he died must go to, and tarry an unknown time, till they are reliev'd by the suffrages of the faithful, in order to satisfy for those errors for which the Son of God has shed his most precious blood? Is it to the honour of Christ that he cannot, or will not save the members of his own body, (which all true Christians are) from the whole demerit of their sins, without the aid of such merits as those of a *Thomas à Becket*, dispensed out of a treasury kept by an *Alexander*, a *Boniface*, or a *Julius*? And yet thus it seems it must be, that either true penitents must make full atonement for their greater sins here, or go to purgatory to effect it when they die. And some of God's best servants, if they happen to die suddenly before they have repented of an idle word, (which they give as an instance of * *venial sins*,) must have the same lot.

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Blessed

* The author of the *profession of catholick faith*, &c. speaks cautiously. But if any would know what exceeding great crimes are reckon'd but slight and venial faults by the Popish doctrine, let them consult

Blessed Jesus! Is this the love of thine *which passeth knowledge*? Is this what thy apostle calls thy *unsearchable riches*? Is this the grace which he celebrates, that *tho' thou wast rich, yet for our sake thou becamest poor*; that *we, thro' thy poverty, might be made rich*? Was this the meaning of that call of thine, *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest*, that they should still be liable to a yoke so much heavier than that of Jewish rites and ceremonies, even a sort of temporary hell? Is it thus, that the *Lamb of God takes away the sins of the world*, and that thy *blood cleanseth us from all sin*, that after all our faith and proof given of its being genuine, we must make atonement for our selves here; or if even providence itself by sudden death, or the loss of reason, prevents our doing it here, must do it in the horrors of a purgatory? Hast thou so paid our debt, that there is a large part of it which we must discharge our selves, or our friends for us, before we can get to heaven, or else must be cast into a prison from whence we cannot go till we have *paid the uttermost farthing*, Matt. v. 26. which text the *Profession*, &c. alledges for a proof of purgatory, and pretends the authority of St. Cyprian: of which hereafter.

(3.) This purgatory-fire is *dishonourable to the Holy Spirit*, whose office is to apply the redemption purchased by Christ, and whom the church of *Rome* owns to “be with the Father and the Son together worshipped and glorified.” ----- He was promised to *guide* the apostles (who were appointed to publish the gospel salvation) *into all truth*. But this important doctrine of purgatory
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consult the 8th chapter of a book entitled, *The practical divinity of the Papists discover'd to be destructive of christianity and men's souls*, publish'd in the year 1676, by Mr. David Clarkson, who was ejected from Mortlack in Surry for non-conformity, and preached the 12th sermon in the morning exercises against Popery concerning justification.

either was not revealed to them, or else they *shunned to declare* this part of the *counsel of God*, as far as we can find in their writings; and that it was handed down from them by any unwritten tradition, we must have better evidence than has yet been produced before we can believe it. And sure it is a dishonour to the Holy Ghost to suppose him to direct a company of men (whom they call a *council*) to anathematize those who do not receive what was not written in those scriptures which were given by his inspiration; especially if such a doctrine stands in full and direct repugnancy to an essential article of the Christian faith, as this doctrine of purgatory does; at least it seems to do so: and can we suppose the Holy Ghost would no where give us any account of this middle state of souls which depart this life *in God's grace*, and yet *into torment*? That he should mention heaven and hell so expressly (when a future state of rewards and punishments appeared reasonable to many that had no revelation) and at the same time should take no notice of this same purgatory-fire, which cannot be known but by revelation; and that he should give no manner of directions about the method of escaping or getting out of it? And thus we must speak till the partizans of *Rome* can agree to point us out to some scripture that speaks plainly to their purpose.

Besides, is it not dishonourable to the Holy Spirit, to represent his work in the application of what Christ has purchased to believers as imperfect? Is not what he does, when he works faith in us, and so unites us to Christ, and makes us *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. sufficient to qualify us for the full remission of sin purchased by Christ, without our own sufferings in purgatory, by which it is pretended that the merits of Christ are applied? Surely there is enough in what the Spirit works in believers to put them

in a condition to receive the full benefit of what Christ has purchased.---- And we ought to think so, seeing faith and repentance are all that is mention'd in scripture as necessary to this purpose, and no notice taken of other satisfactions.

I shall only add, Is it to the honour of the blessed Spirit of God, that he should encourage believers in several places of scripture to hope for a freedom from all uneasiness, and an admission into paradise, upon the dissolution of their earthly tabernacles, when at the same time they are exposed to a middle state of torment, in which they may suffer more intense pains than ever they felt on earth, even when they were *weary with their groaning, all night have made their bed to swim, and watered their couch with their tears.* Psal. vi. 6. But this leads me to another head.

(4.) This doctrine directly tends to spoil much of the comfort, which should arise in believers minds from a sense of their reconciliation to God, thro' the blood of his Son; and consequently to abate the gratitude they should express, and the freedom they should use in their approaches to their heavenly Father. Of this the apostle speaks, *Rom. v. 1 --- 5. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God thro' our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access, by faith, into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us.* From this, and such like passages in scripture, all that are in the grace of God, (as every one that after death goes to purgatory is supposed to be) may justly take great comfort; but what a damp must it cast upon their spirits, when they think of the satisfaction they are to make in
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the purgatory-fire? And how can they, as otherwise they might, *joy in God thro' our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom they have now receiv'd the atonement?* Rom. v. 11. Christian joy is the best friend to gratitude, and all the proper expressions of it in the *fruits of righteousness*, and therefore the apostle would have believers *rejoice evermore*. *Rejoice*, saith he, *in the Lord always; and again I say rejoice*, Phil. iv. 4. And I cannot help thinking, that a doctrine which has such an unfriendly aspect upon the comfort of believers, is by no means dictated by the *Holy Ghost the Comforter*.

It certainly abates the relief we should find against the slavish fear of death, when we think that tho' Christ has *overcome him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*; yet for ought we know, or can know, without some sort of revelation, we may happen to lie in purgatory till the day of judgment; so must lose the comfort of all those texts that would encourage us to look on death with pleasure, and make us *desire to be dissolved, and be with Christ* in paradise; since unless we are not only in the grace of God, but something very extraordinary too, we shall not be so happy as the penitent thief, who was with Christ in paradise the day he expired; but may perhaps lie a great while in extremity of pain, even as long as our bodies shall continue in the grave. If this be *dying in the Lord, and sleeping in Jesus*, and the rest which good men are to expect when they put off this tabernacle, the scriptures have been strangely misunderstood, and that not only by us poor heretics, but by the earliest fathers of the church, for whom our purgatory-fire-men profess the greatest reverence, and by whose *unanimous consent* they are engaged to *interpret* the holy oracles.* These all agree, that good men, when they died, were
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* See Creed of Pius IV.

presently in a *state of happiness*. This was the sense of the primitive church for at least the first four centuries, as has been abundantly evidenced by the Divines of the Reformation ; and we stand ready to maintain it, as often as we are call'd to it. I shall only give you a passage out of St. Cyprian, which is greatly to my present purpose ; and I single out that father, because our present convert-makers mention him as interpreting the text which speaks of *paying the uttermost farthing*, in proof of their purgatory, as I observed before.---

“ Let us embrace, saith he, the day that assigns
 “ to every one his habitation, that delivers us
 “ from these worldly snares, and restores us to
 “ the heavenly kingdom. Who, being abroad,
 “ would not hasten to return into his own country ? Who, hastening to sail home, would not
 “ heartily wish for a good wind, that he might
 “ speedily embrace his friends ? We may reckon
 “ paradise for our country ; we have begun already to have the patriarchs for our parents ; why
 “ then do we not hasten and run to see our country, and salute our parents ? A great number of
 “ friends expect us there ; a numerous company
 “ of parents, brethren and sons, desire us, already
 “ secure of their own immortality, but now solicitous about our salvation. How great must
 “ their and our joy be, in the mutual seeing and
 “ embracing each other ? What must be the pleasure of the heavenly kingdoms, where there is
 “ no fear of death, but a certainty of eternal
 “ life ? There is a glorious choir of the apostles,
 “ there is the number of the exulting prophets,
 “ there is the innumerable company of martyrs,
 “ crowned for the victory of their fight and passion ; there are the triumphing virgins, who,
 “ by the strength of continency, subdued the
 “ concupiscence of the flesh and body ; there are
 “ the charitable, who are rewarded for their works
 “ of

“righteousness, in feeding and giving to the poor;
 “who, by keeping the precepts of the Lord,
 “conveyed their earthly patrimony unto the hea-
 “venly treasury. To these, dearly beloved bre-
 “thren, let us hasten, and wish to be speedily
 “with these, that so we may speedily come to
 “Christ.”

Thus this father, who wrote in the third century, comforted the Christians of his age against the fear of death, and exhorted them cheerfully to receive it.* And if this be consistent with the modern doctrine of purgatory, I am content they shall have St. *Cyprian* for their patron.

However, the holy scripture (and THAT is the religion of Protestants) mentions nothing but rest and comfort, joy and blessedness to those, who die in the faith of him, who has *loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood*, Rev. i. 5. They are said to *rest from their labours*, Rev. xiv. 13; which, as archbishop *Tillotson* observes, “they cannot be said to do, who are in a state
 “of great anguish and torment, as those are sup-
 “posed to be, who are in purgatory.” Nor is it easy to imagine, why they should have so much courage as to be willing to be *absent from the body*, if they are to be no otherwise *present with the Lord* † that bought them, than is consistent with the horrors and agonies of that middle place of torment.---- If it be said, that this *rest* and *presence with the Lord*, is peculiar to martyrs, apostles, and some very good men, I would know what authority they have for that limitation; and I am sure that must be a very plain authority that can be set in opposition to what has been offer’d upon this argument, by our Reformed writers.---- This leads me to the next branch of my discourse,
viz.

IV.

* See Crit. Hist. of the Creed, p. 202.

† 2 Cor. v. 8.

IV. To answer what may be *objected* against the conclusiveness of the argument upon which I have insisted, *viz.* That the *Romish* tenet of purgatory is opposite to the scripture doctrine, of being cleansed from all sin by the blood of Christ, as before represented.----All their arguments to prove purgatory are objections against my discourse; and such of them as are material shall be consider'd. They plead scripture, tradition, and reason; with what evidence let us see.

1. *Scripture* is alledg'd. And here I frankly own, that all the arguments I have offer'd from the doctrine of the plenary satisfaction of Christ against purgatory, must be given up, if it has plain scripture to support it. Then instead of rejecting it we must reconcile it as well as we can with those texts that seem to make against it; and shew there is no *real* contradiction between the two articles of faith, and that they only *seem* repugnant when they are very well consistent. Thus, we own the punishing of sinners with *everlasting destruction* to be consistent with all we say of the love of God, and the grace of Christ; because it appears plainly from scripture, that the finally impenitent, and unbelieving, can have no relief by the great propitiation which we have been speaking of. Thus we admit also, that believers themselves are to wait the whole time of life, before they can be freed from all the afflictions and temptations which now make them so uneasy; yea, and must tarry till the great day before they receive their perfect consummation and blessing; and that notwithstanding the Redeemer's bearing their sins, and dying for them, they must all die, and their bodies see corruption; because scripture has assured, what experience confirms, that *it is appointed for all men once to die*. And tho' the blood of the Son of God was sufficient to have secured all believers an immediate translation into full consummate happiness, both in
body

body and soul, yet we own that things are otherwise ordered by the divine wisdom, as appears in fact.

In like manner, if it appear'd from plain scripture, that believers must make such a satisfaction as is pretended in purgatory, we must be content to adore the riches of God's love, and the grace of Christ, that however, they shall not finally and for ever perish, but at last have eternal life: I say *plain* scripture, and not from a few dark texts wrested to serve a turn, and which no man would have ever thought to be to the purpose, if he had not first taken the doctrine for granted.

And this I verily believe to be the case. The church of *Rome* saw fit, for several *valuable considerations*, to enact the belief of a purgatory; and then all the wit of her ablest men was imploy'd to search for scriptures that might support it. Were not this the bottom of the business, could they possibly produce so many texts that are evidently nothing to the purpose. For instance, some of them say, that the flaming sword, mention'd *Gen.* iii. 24. was a " witness to sinners, that they must " pass thro' purgatory to paradise." To which I hope I need make no answer; but shall only remark, in the words of *one* of our fathers (who made a vigorous stand against Popery fifty years ago,) " A flaming sword seem'd a good weapon, " and they were willing to take it into their hands; " and indeed their great argument for all their articles has been fire and sword." *

Bellarmino himself alledges, *Psal.* lxvi. 12. *We walked thro' fire and water, and thou broughtest us into a wealthy place.* To which, saith *Mr. Bramstone* †, we will answer him in the words of an applauded Bishop of their own (*Fisher of Rochester*.) " I " approve not such trifling as this, which explains " this

* *Mr. West's sermon in the Morning Exercises against Popery.*

† *Answer to texts which Papists cite for purgatory, p. 609.*

“ this place of purgatory.” And indeed all arguments they bring from the Old Testament, are arrant triflings. *Bellarmino* in effect owns it, when he confesses they are (all but one) only probable arguments: which are very unfit to establish an article of faith, which must be receiv’d upon pain of damnation:---for so the Cardinal expressly declares, that he must burn “ for ever in hell that denies purgatory.”

You will be perhaps curious to know what that *single* testimony from the Old Testament is, which the great champion of the church of *Rome* so much confides in.-----But perhaps you will be surpris’d when I tell you that you can’t find it in your Bible, but must look for it in the Apocrypha, 2 *Maccab.* xii. 41, &c. However, as this book by the confession of our adversaries was never receiv’d as canonical by the Jews, to whom were committed the oracles of God, I shall be excus’d from answering the passage they refer to. And may justly add, that (supposing it was what the council of *Trent* has declar’d it,) it is no ways clear for the proof of that to which it is apply’d by them. This is affirm’d by our excellent *Primate* (to whom the Protestant religion and liberty itself owes so much, that while men have any value for either, his name will be remembred with honour,) and what he asserts he proves so fully, that I shall only refer to what he has said in his discourse on purgatory, p. 14, 15, 16. To which if our modern disputants have any thing to reply, I assure them they shall not want an answer. I shall only add, what has been often observed, and particularly by the learned *L. Capellus* *, that “ it “ is astonishing, that the doctors of the church of “ *Rome* should bring evidence out of the Old Testament to prove purgatory, when they will not “ affirm that there was any such thing, or that any “ when

* De purgatorio, p. 45.

“when they died went to it.” I add, especially, that they should lay their main stress upon a book whose character is so dubious, that one of their own writers tells us, that the doctrine of purgatory is more certain and evident than the authority of that book; and that more evident things are not to be proved by those that are less so. †

Indeed if they will make out their doctrine of purgatory, we must expect it from the New Testament; where we may imagine such an important article of faith to be clearly revealed, if there be any thing in it. Here their late author ‡ presents us with that of St. Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 13---15. *Every man's work shall be made manifest. For the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.* But how often might a man read over this passage before he would find purgatory in it; unless he came with a strong prepossession in favour of that opinion. If we consider the scope of the apostle (by which surely we are to interpret his writings) we shall find that he is speaking of some who held indeed the foundation of Christianity, but built upon it such doctrines and practices as would not bear the trial; which he represents as *wood, hay and stubble*, which are not proof against the fire. Such a person, the apostle tells us, hath brought himself into a very dangerous state, tho' he would not deny the possibility of his salvation, as archbishop Tillotson observes, and adds, that being saved *so as by fire, or out of the fire*, is a proverbial phrase used not only in scripture but in profane authors to signify a narrow escape out of great danger. Thus Amos iv. 11. *Ye were as a fire-brand pluck'd*

† Soto. in Theol. Leyd. p. 506.

‡ Profession, &c. p. 35.

pluck'd out of the burning, and Jude 23. Others save with fear, plucking them out of the fire.

But whatever be the sense of this passage, is it so plain a declaration of their doctrine of purgatory, that the evidence of it cannot be withstood, and no other probable account can be given of it? Does it appear so plainly from this text, that (according to our author) “such as both in their faith, and in
“the practice of their lives have stuck to the foundation, which is Christ Jesus, so as not to forfeit
“his grace by mortal sin, tho’ they have been
“otherwise guilty of great imperfections by building wood, hay and stubble upon this foundation,
“(yea though the sins of which they have been
“guilty are but small, which even God’s best servants are more or less liable to, as he had said just
“before,) that such must pass through a fiery
“trial, and that by it is meant *their purgatory*?” *

Is it evidently the design of the apostle in this passage to lay it down as an article of faith, that such persons as they mention must make satisfaction in purgatory-fire? Does the scope of the apostle naturally lead to this, and can he not be understood of the damage that the false apostles and their deluded followers should sustain by corrupting the pure gospel of Christ, and departing from its simplicity upon worldly considerations? Are the Papists sure that no unprejudiced person can understand it (as reasonably at least) of such doctrines and practices which might be built upon the foundations of Christianity to the great hazard and danger of men’s salvation, and particularly of the doctrine of purgatory? Concerning which the excellent author before mentioned tells us †, “they mean by it an
“estate of temporary punishments after this life,
“from which men may be translated into heaven
“by the prayers of the living and the sacrifice of
“the

* Profession, &c. p. 35.

† Sermon. 11.

“ the *Mafs* ; and adds, That this doctrine was not
 “ known in the primitive church, nor can be proved
 “ from scripture, we have the free acknowledgment
 “ of as learned and eminent men as any of their
 “ church ; which is to acknowledge, that it is a
 “ superstructure upon the Christian religion. And
 “ tho’ indeed in one sense it be a building of *gold*
 “ and *silver* upon the foundation of Christianity,
 “ considering the vast revenues which this doctrine
 “ (and that of indulgence which depends upon it)
 “ brings into the church, yet I doubt not but in
 “ the apostle’s sense it will be found *hay* and *stubble*.
 “ But how groundless soever it be, it’s too gainful
 “ a doctrine to be parted with.” And he has a pas-
 sage in another * sermon to the same purpose.
 “ They pretend a mighty bank and treasure of me-
 “ rits in the church, which they sell to the people
 “ for ready money, giving them bills of exchange
 “ from the *Pope* to *purgatory*, when they who grant
 “ them have no reason to think they will avail them
 “ or be accepted in the other world.”

It may be said, this interpretation of St. *Paul*’s words was the sense of a poor blind heretick. But I would fain know how it came to pass, that so many doctors of their own church could not see this article of faith in so plain a text. How was it that one should say, † that “ we ought not to lay any stress
 “ in the proof of purgatory upon passages of scrip-
 “ ture,” particularly mentioning this which I am now considering. And that their martyr ‡ *Fisher* should own, that “ he could not readily find any
 “ one scripture, that would force one to confess a
 “ purgatory : and if there be any such, saith he,
 “ it has hitherto escap’d the most diligent enqui-
 “ rers.” I should not mention *Peter Cotton* the Je-
 suit, if I had not the authority of so grave and faith-

H h ful

* Serm. 30.

† Petrus à Soto, in sacred. Instruct. Lect. 1. de purg.

‡ Contra Lutherum artic. 18.

ful an historian as their own *Thuanus*, who among other questions, proposed this to the evil spirit in a pretended *Demoniac*: “What place of scripture
“there was by which purgatory must evidently be
“proved.”

But to return: *Bellarmino* tells us that this text is one of the obscurest but yet most profitable ones [for that purpose:] upon which * one observes;
“So illustriously manifest is their cause in the scrip-
“tures, that its highest advantages are the deepest
“obscurities, and its clearest light treasur’d up in
“the profoundest darkness.”

But what is most to be wonder’d at is, that none of the *Greek* fathers could see this doctrine so evidently proposed in this text; *Theodoret* and *Theophylact* interpreting the fire here spoke of to be the fire of hell, and the day which is to reveal it the day of judgment.----And that the *Greek* church neither at this day does, nor ever did receive this doctrine, how plainly soever it is pretended by some to be held forth in the scripture.----From whence by the way, as was observed long ago, “we need no
“clearer evidence to shew that the whole business
“of purgatory is but an error of the *Latin* church,
“and not an article of the *Catholic* faith.†

I have been the longer upon this text, because it is set foremost in the list of those which our modern author saith, the fathers and ecclesiastical writers interpret of purgatory; and because the answer I have given to this may be applied to all the rest they alledge, as far as I am directly concern’d. I mean that none of them are plain and clear enough to found an article of faith upon, and so put us to difficulty when we affirm that the doctrine of purgatory satisfaction stands in opposition to that of atonement by Christ’s blood.-----And if any of the labourers in the *Roman* harvest, who at present
swarm

* Mr. *Bramstone*’s texts examined, &c.

† Archbishop’s discourse of purgatory, p. 43:

swarm among us, tell you otherwise, I shall only say, let them pitch upon one single text which by the unanimous consent of the fathers is to be taken and interpreted of purgatory in the sense of the present church of *Rome*, and they shall receive satisfaction.

Will they pretend this of the 2d passage they produce in evidence for their doctrine of purgatory? *Matt. v. 25, 26.* Is the *prison* there spoken of, out of which men must *not come 'till they have paid the uttermost farthing*, the prison of purgatory, according to the unanimous consent of the fathers? They mention only *Cyprian*, and him very wrongfully, as the archbishop of *Canterbury* has proved in the excellent discourse I have referred to; and the long passage I repeated to you before out of that father seems very little to agree with the point they would fain have him bear testimony to.---And many such passages might be easily produced to shew the opinion of the primitive writers to have been, that the souls of the godly immediately, after their separation from the body, pass into a place of bliss and happiness.---They never dream'd of their paying the uttermost farthing in purgatory-prison.----I know, indeed, they represented them as in a state of expectation, looking and waiting for the day of judgment; which *Tertullian* elegantly expresses, [*in candidâ expectare diem judicii*] alluding to the candidates or suitors for preferments among the *Romans*,) but of purgatory pains in the intermediate state, it does not appear they knew anything. And when then may we expect a text which they all agree to expound of the *Romish* purgatory? Let me only add, what one would think should put our present missionaries a little out of countenance, when they cite this passage out of *St. Matthew* to support their fable, that several of their own learn-

ed men put a quite different interpretation upon it. *

A third text we are presented with in the fore-mentioned *profession*, &c. is that *Matt. xii. 32. It shall not be forgiven him neither in this world, neither in the world to come.* "Which words, saith "the author, &c. plainly imply that some sins "which are not forgiven in this world, may be "forgiven in the world to come." But is this interpretation according to the unanimous consent of the fathers, or of their own doctors either? The contrary is full well known. I know they can quote *St. Austin* for this notion in general, (tho' he never, I believe, dream'd of their purgatory) and that from this text, that there may be some future remission of sins after this life; but what remission, or of what sins, he declares he dares not aver, and in several places expresses himself doubtful about it; and therefore his authority in the interpretation of this passage, is very unfit to make it a ground for an article of faith.-----*Nay, Bellarmine* himself acknowledges, that according to the rules of logic, purgatory cannot be inferr'd from it. And really, a text from whence a doctrine cannot be inferr'd by the rules of logic, is a very indifferent foundation for a canon with an anathema annexed to it.---

However, one would think that *St. Mark* and *St. Luke* were better interpreters of their brother *Matthew*, than all fathers and doctors put together; and their sense is, that those who commit the sin against the Holy Ghost, shall *never be forgiven*. † But suppose our Saviour's expression in *Matthew* does intimate a forgiveness expected in the world to come, why must this relate to purgatory? Why, it cannot be in hell, for there is no forgiveness-----right----nor in heaven, for there is no sin--true.--- But is there no forgiveness to be expected at the place, where *God will judge the world in righteousness,*
by

* Particularly *Maldonate*, a Jesuit.

† See *Mark iii. 29. Luke xii. 10.*

by the man whom he has ordain'd? Acts xvii. 31. Shall not true believers be openly acknowledged and acquitted at the day of judgment? Will not your sins be blotted out when the times of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord? Acts iii. 19. And did not the fathers understand this place of the last day? tho' some Protestants * refer it to the destruction of *Jerusalem*. I shall only ask, where all nations shall be gather'd before the judge, and from whence they are to go into life eternal, or everlasting punishment? and may say, the sins that have not been forgiven here, shall not be forgiven there.

This may be a sufficient answer to their argument from this text; and I might add, that if our Saviour designed an intimation of any expectations that men might form of forgiveness in another world, he might possibly have an eye to a common notion among the *Jews* to whom he spake, viz. "That not only in the kingdom of the *Messiah*, but in the state after death, remission might be had for some sins, which could not otherwise be forgiven." But whatever our Saviour might farther mean, if he designed to intimate any thing beside what he plainly declared, that the sin against the Holy Ghost was utterly irremissible, surely it could not be the purgatory of the *Romanists*; for these men are to satisfy, not to be pardoned. "What, saith our archbishop, † have we here to do with remission of sins? Purgatory is a place not where sins are remitted, but where they are punished with the greatest severity. Nay, what is still more, punished after they are remitted; nay, what is still more extraordinary, therefore punished because they are remitted; for if the guilt were not remitted, the sinner could not go to purgatory, nor have the favour of being punished there."

H h 3

Thus

* *Grotius* and *Hammond*.† *Disc. of Purg.* p. 20.

Thus I have considered those texts which our adversaries seem to lay most stress upon, and which appear least impertinent to their purpose. Nor should I think it worth while to mention any more of *Bellarmino's* 19 texts; but in compliment to our modern authors, I must take notice of the fourth scripture he alledges, which the Cardinal, it seems, overlook'd, 1 *Pet.* iii. 18, 19, 20. where Christ is said, by his spirit, to have gone and *preached to the spirits in prison, which some time were disobedient.*

* “Which prison, says he, could be no other than purgatory.” But do the fathers and their own doctors unanimously agree in this interpretation of the difficult text? Surely they would, if it was plain enough to ground an article of faith. I shall only farther ask, Did these disobedient people die in mortal sin, or in a state of grace? If the former, they went to hell; if the latter, to *Limbus*, a place where there is no torment: And what then is become of the argument for purgatory from this passage? At least is it evident to all unprejudiced persons, that the apostle in this place has reference to that doctrine? Nor is this the only obscure text they alledge in proof of their doctrine; but resolving to puzzle the cause, they have recourse to another which has been thought one of the hardest to be understood in the whole New Testament, 1 *Cor.* xv. 29. *Else what shall they do that are baptised for the dead?* It's pity we have not the unanimous consent of the fathers for the interpretation of this text; perhaps then we should know what to make of it, but till such an explication be produc'd, we must be excused from admitting it as a proof of their new article of faith. ----- And if we could suppose it would be taken well, for hereticks to explain a difficult passage of scripture, which has puzzled so many of their own doctors, I would refer them to a very probable ac-

count

count given of this place by a learned gentleman, in a * book published a few years ago.

Now to conclude this part of the argument: from what has been said, I infer that there is no plain scripture proof for purgatory, and consequently it ought to be rejected as being in direct opposition to the scripture doctrine of justification by faith in the blood of *Jesus Christ the Son of God*, which (rightly apply'd to) perfectly and fully *cleanseth from all sin*; and the objection from scripture is answered.

2. But secondly they alledge *tradition*; but till our opponents have answered the fifth sermon in this course, upon the head of *scripture and tradition*, I may be allow'd to take no notice of their objection from thence. However, to what I have hinted before, of purgatory being a novel doctrine, and contrary to the sense of the Catholick church, for at least the first four centuries, I shall add a passage of the learned bishop *Bull*, in his answer to a letter written from Monsieur *de Meaux* to Mr. *Nelson*, † which I will leave our friends of the church of *Rome* to consider: “ The doctrine, saith he, “ of indulgences, as taught in the church of *Rome*, “ depends upon the fiction of purgatory; it sup- “ poseth a superfluity of the satisfactions of the “ saints, which being jumbled together with the “ merits and satisfaction of our Saviour, makes up “ one treasure of the church; that the bishop of “ *Rome* keeps the key of it.----Is not this now, “ saith he, a doctrine worthy of a place in our “ creed, and to be made an article of the Catholick “ faith.-----He adds, That the doctrine and use of “ indulgences were never heard of in the church “ of Christ for many hundred years, is certain, “ and confessed too by divers learned men of the “ *Roman* communion. I shall cite only one of “ them, saith the bishop, but he such a one as

H h 4

may

* *Fortuita sacra*, Rotterodami 1727, p. 137, &c.

† Sect. 3. p. 278.

“ may be *instar omnium*: our *Roffensis* [Fisher, bi-
 “ shop of *Rocheſter*] *Luther’s* great antagonist,
 “ and *Rome’s* martyr, gives us this account of in-
 “ dulgences. Many perhaps are tempted not to re-
 “ ly much upon indulgences, upon this considera-
 “ tion, that the use of them appears to be new,
 “ and very lately known among Christians. To
 “ whom I answer, it is not very certain who was
 “ the first author of them. The doctrine of pur-
 “ gatory was rarely, if at all heard of amongst the
 “ ancients, and to this very day the *Greeks* believe
 “ it not; nor was the belief either of purgatory or
 “ indulgences so necessary in the primitive church
 “ as it is now. So long as men were unconcerned
 “ about purgatory, nobody enquired after indul-
 “ gences; for upon that depends all the worth of
 “ indulgences; take away purgatory, and there is
 “ no more need of these. Seeing therefore pur-
 “ gatory was so lately known and received in the
 “ universal church, who will wonder that in the first
 “ ages of the church indulgences were not made
 “ use of?” *

3. In the last place they urge *reason*; and truly
 if that be on their side, the Protestants will be hard
 set. But how do they ground their belief of pur-
 gatory upon reason? “ They answer, because rea-
 “ son clearly teaches these two things: 1. That all
 “ or every sin, how small soever, deserves punish-
 “ ment. 2. That some sins are so small, either
 “ thro’ the levity of the matter, or for want of
 “ full deliberation in the action, as not to deserve
 “ eternal punishment. From whence, say they,
 “ it is plain, that besides the place of eternal pu-
 “ nishment, which we call hell, there must be also
 “ a place of temporal punishment for little sins,
 “ which we call purgatory.” † And that I may
 throw all their reasoning (such as it is) together:
 “ They say such as depart this life before they have
 “ repented

* Act. 18. contra Lutherum.

† Profess. &c. p. 37.

“ repented for those venial frailties and imperfecti-
 “ ons cannot be supposed to be condemned to the
 “ eternal torment of hell, since the sins they are
 “ guilty of are but small, which even God’s best
 “ servants are liable to.-----Nor can they go strait
 “ to heaven in this state, because the scripture as-
 “ sures us, *There shall in no wise enter thither any*
 “ *thing that defileth*-----and our Saviour assures us,
 “ that we are to *render an account for every idle word*.
 “ And they farther plead, that *God will render to*
 “ *everyone according to his works*. Now, say they,
 “ this would not be true if there were no such
 “ thing as purgatory.”

But in answer to all this,

1. We allow that every sin deserves punishment, seeing it is a transgression of the law.

2. We allow that all transgressions of the law are not equally heinous.

3. We allow particularly that there is a vast difference between the common infirmities of good men, and the wilful offences of wicked transgressors.

4. But that any sin is in its own nature venial, so as not to deserve eternal punishment, if God should proceed in a way of rigorous justice, we cannot presently agree to grant; but must expect their proof that some acts of disobedience to God cannot justly be punish’d with everlasting destruction.

5. Especially they must prove this of all venial sins as such; of which if they please to look over their catalogues, they will find many much worse than some they call mortal; * particularly than the mortal sin of denying purgatory and its appendages, and other peculiar doctrines of the church.

6. But to come home to the matter; with what reasons will they prove, that if the justice of God
 may

* See *Clarkson*, ut *suprà*.

may deliver Believers from the pains of eternal death, he may not upon the same account remit all temporal penalties, and take them directly into a state of rest without passing thro' the fire of purgatory? Is not justice satisfied by the sufferings of the Son of God? and then what need of farther satisfaction? Or are they not morally qualified to have the benefit of Christ's sacrifice, by being penitent believers? Is not their repentance an habitual disposition? Do they not exercise it daily? Are they not bringing the *sacrifices of God, a broken and contrite heart, to God by Christ Jesus continually?* and if when *no man can understand his errors*, they should not have actually repented of *an idle word* (in the sense of this author) or any ordinary failing, is it reasonable to imagine that departing this life in God's grace, in a state of friendship with him, thro' the mediation of his Son, and the sanctification of the Spirit; is it reasonable, I say, to imagine that they are liable to burn in a temporary hell, and for ought we know for some ages, before they can enter into rest? and this too not for further moral preparation, but merely to make satisfaction? I appeal to every serious mind, whether it does not appear at first sight reasonable, that, if *the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin*, and *there is no condemnation to them that are in him*, and *who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit*, there needs no other method of purgation or satisfaction,----- and that if there needs no other, there can be no other; because infinite wisdom would not appoint that for which there is no occasion, and infinite goodness would be sure not to prescribe any thing grievous and distressing without a real necessity for it.

7. But I must come a little closer to these men of reason, and ask whether it is not as reasonable that God should receive such as I have described immediately into a state of joy and felicity, as that he should take the worst of sinners who die immediately after their baptism, or who are any way
murder'd

murder'd for their religion, or such as are assail'd from mortal sins by attrition and the sacraments, if they have an interest in certain merits; I say, that God should take such directly into heaven, and make them partakers of the beatifical vision? If this be reason, I must own myself in a wrong way of thinking.

8. Lastly, I have one word more to say to them, *viz.* I wonder with what face they can pretend to reason us out of so many plain texts which assert our doctrine of forgiveness as before stated, when in spite of scripture, tradition, reason and common sense, they would obtrude upon us their doctrine of *Transubstantiation* upon the authority of their *Hoc est Corpus meum, This is my Body*, which we have evidently proved to be nothing to their purpose.* I can't help saying, Do these men talk of reason!

IV. I am to make a few remarks upon the whole.

1. Let us see what ground we have not only to *reject* the Romish doctrine of purgatory as having no foundation in scripture, (which is enough to spoil the credit of any opinion that would set up for an article of faith) but to reject it with *abhorrence* as being contrary to scripture, and particularly that essential article of forgiveness of all sin thro' the blood of Christ. It may indeed be justly enough ridiculed, but it ought to be detested by all those who *honour God and love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*.

2. Let us observe the reason we have to bless God, that we have the Scriptures, a perfect rule for our faith and practice: and that we have them in a language we understand, and are allowed to judge for ourselves of what they contain: that we are not obliged to receive any thing as a truth of God, or appointment of Christ, but what we find there; and may reject any thing that appears contrary

* See Dr. Harris's Sermon.

trary to the word of God, whatever power pretends to impose it; and may slight their *anathemas*, as a *curse causeless* which *shall not come*.

And let us be thankful also that we live under a government which allows us to keep our Bibles, and take our religion out of them, and make publick profession of it too, without incurring the penalties of an *inquisition*, or the *wholesome severities* which our fathers felt, and some of us remember. Let us bless God for the Reformation, and the security given to it by the Revolution, and the prospect we have of its continuance under the protection of his most gracious Majesty and his illustrious house: for whom let us pray, and for *all that are in authority, that under them we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty*. And let us take care that we *submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil-doers, and the praise of them that do well*, 1 Pet. ii. 13, &c. And seeing God has made us free, as *free let us not use our liberty for a cloak of maliciousness*, ver. 14. *that with well-doing we may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*: that they may be out of countenance when they call us *rebels*, as they ought to be when they call us *hereticks*.

3. From what has been offer'd there is reason to encourage good men not to be frighten'd with an imaginary danger of purgatory-fire. *If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another*, [have communion with the Catholick church] *and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth from all sin*, and we need fear no further reckoning. I have shew'd the pleas of our adversaries from scripture, tradition, and reason, to be vain; do not let them therefore terrify us with their *Ignis fatuus* out of our senses, as they fain would do to persuade us out of our money, which I am satisfied is really
the

the bottom of the business. The *fire* of purgatory is like the *thunder* of the *Vatican*, a harmless thing, which no wise man would be afraid of, were it not too often connected with tortures, massacres, and assassinations: otherwise it would be regarded as fit only to frighten children, as those stories of apparitions are, which *Bellarmino* makes use of to confirm his doctrine of purgatory; to which argument I hope you'll excuse me that I have not return'd a particular answer.

4. *Lastly*, no wicked man should encourage himself by this fiction of purgatory to continue in sin, and neglect the gospel salvation, which *teacheth to deny ungodliness and all worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*. Do not let men imagine that attrition, with the sacrament of penance, will secure them from hell, and that they may escape purgatory too, if they have money to pay for indulgencies, &c.---No, my friends, remember that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*, and that even the blood and righteousness of Christ itself cannot save those who will not repent and be converted. Away with all things that pretend to be substituted in the room of *righteousness and true holiness*; and remember that though there be no purgatory, there is a *hell*, where *the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched*. From which God of his infinite mercy save us through the blood of his dear Son. *Amen*.

The Principles of POPERY *Schismatical.*

A

S E R M O N

PREACH'D AT

Salters-Hall, April 3, 1735.

By MOSES LOWMAN.

Rom. xi. 22.

Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell severity, but towards thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

ST. Paul writing to the church of Rome, usefully warns it against the danger of schism; lest it should be cut off from the unity and communion of the true church. He inforces this warning by considerations, equally reasonable, and persuasive. He sets before them, the then present state of the Jewish church, God's antient

tient people, who were cut off from the privileges of God's church, by their unbelief. He mentions their own happiness, who from among the Heathen, and idolatrous nations, were received into God's church, and had obtain'd thereby an interest in all the blessings of God's peculiar people. These were instances both of goodness and severity, which deserv'd an attentive observation, a careful and wise improvement. Did God reject the *Jews*, and cast off his own people, which had been his *only church*, and so highly favour'd by him for so long a time? Did God give such an instance of severe justice? Other churches ought wisely to consider, why this church was cut off, and how they themselves stand; they ought to observe the apostle's reasoning: *Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith; be not high minded, but fear.** They ought to learn this wisdom, that they carefully watch against a proud conceit of themselves, and an uncharitable contempt of others, apprehensive, they may lose the privileges of the true church, as the *Jews* had done before them, if they shall fall into a like state of apostacy. If God cast off his antient people for *their* unbelief, the *Roman* church, to which the apostle writes, had just reason to fear, if it should apostatize from the Christian faith, if it should renounce obedience to Christ Jesus the Lord, and to his gospel, the rule of his religion, *it* also should be cut off.

Before I proceed to a particular consideration of the subject I am to discourse upon, it will be proper to make some more general remarks on the text itself.

First, We may observe, the apostle represents the Jewish church *cut off* from the *unity* and *communion* of God's *true church*, while it yet continued a
visible

visible church in all acts of external communion. This church, which the apostle represents, an example of justice cut off from the privileges of the true church, was yet a church which had many things to glory in, it had an *antiquity* of two thousand years, *a succession of priesthood* from *Aaron*, to whose family the priesthood was by God's express appointment confin'd. It had been long favoured by God, above all nations of the earth; theirs were *the prophets and the fathers*, and to them were *committed the oracles of God*. They used then the same external forms of worship and communion, which they used, when Christ himself was a member of their church, and in communion with it; and yet the apostle calls upon the Church of *Rome*, to behold this very church an example of God's severity, cut off from the communion and privileges of the true church, by unbelief, because she followed the tradition of her doctors, and their false interpretations of the scripture; and having falsified the true meaning of the prophecies, rejected the promised Messiah, when he came, she was cut off, for that unbelief.

2. We are to observe, this warning is directed in particular to the *church of Rome*, intimating, *that church* was not free from the danger of schism, or being cut off from the privileges of the true church, as the Jewish church now was. One would think the apostle had foreseen how the church of *Rome* would wrest the scriptures in aftertimes, to support her pretence to the prerogative of an unerring, infallible, and indefectible church, and had therefore wisely put in this caution against it beforehand. Here the church of *Rome*, in its best and purest state, is directed to behold the severity of God, towards the Jewish church, as a warning to take heed, lest by a like apostacy from the faith and obedience of the true church, she herself should

should also be cut off. Does the apostle here suppose the church of *Rome* could never fail? That it could never be in danger of losing the privileges of the true church? Does the apostle suppose the church of *Rome* must necessarily be “ever pure;” “and holy in her doctrines, and terms of communion?” And therefore always free from any pernicious errors?” When on the contrary the apostle supposes, that the church of *Rome* has no such prerogative above other churches; that she ought not to depend on any such groundless and false hopes; that she stands in need of this warning as much as any other church: if she shall disregard it, and not continue in the faith, and obedience of the gospel, she will not continue in the goodness of God, and the church of *Rome* itself shall also be cut off.

3. We are here also to observe, the great danger of schism, as it cuts off from the communion and privileges of the true church. The apostle’s solemn and awful warning to the church of *Rome*, does evidently mean this. Schism, real schism, which cuts off from the communion of the true church, must deprive men of the hopes, privileges and blessings, which the true church of God enjoys, in God’s peculiar favour and grace, according to his promises and covenant: While we continue in the communion of the true church of God, we continue in the goodness of God, in his peculiar favour: but when we are cut off from the communion of the true church, we must fall from that state of favour, which God has promised to his church, as a people peculiarly consecrated to his service, and entitled to peculiar marks of his protection and grace.

The subject then I am to discourse upon, from these words, is of great importance in itself; as it nearly concerns all Christians to know when they

continue in the goodness of God, and when they are cut off from the communion of the true church, and lose their right to the privileges and blessings of it.

It is farther of importance, as it makes a considerable part of the controversy between the church of *Rome* and Protestants; a subject which the Papists have managed with art and subtilty; so as often to impose upon the injudicious, and terrify the weak, and sometimes to prevail upon persons of better understanding and judgment. The great *Chillingworth* owns, * “ He had been sometimes himself “ abused by this fallacy, and known many other “ poor souls seduced, not only from their own “ church and religion, but to Popery by it.”

The question then it is my province to consider is this, Whether the separation of Protestants from the external communion of the church of *Rome* be just and necessary; and whether therefore all the guilt of schism and evil effects of it are not justly chargeable on those principles of the *Roman* church, which made the separation of Protestants from the *Roman* communion necessary for their own reformation.

I shall endeavour to give you such a view of this argument, as I hope will be intelligible and convincing, and upon such principles as are generally receiv'd and owned by all Protestants.

- I. I shall briefly state the true nature of schism, which may also serve to shew the guilt and danger of it.
- II. I shall shew, what reason Protestants have to charge the principles of the church of *Rome* as schismatical.

III. 1

III. I shall shew the weakness and fallacy of those arguments, by which the church of *Rome* attempts to vindicate herself from this charge of schism, and to charge the Protestant reformation with it.

I. I am briefly to shew the true nature of schism, which may also serve to shew the guilt and danger of it.

Schism in general means some contention, division, or disunion in bodies which ought to be united. Schism in religious matters is pretty much the same as sedition and rebellion are in civil matters; so that schism says a memorable author, * “ is an ecclesiastical sedition, as sedition is a lay schism.”

The christian church is properly represented as *one body*, or a society, incorporate by the charter of the gospel, under Jesus Christ as supreme head and governour: And as all true Christians are made members of this one body, they must also be members one of another. The unity of the Christian church will then come under a double notion: the unity of this religious society with Christ as the head of it; and the unity of the several members of it with each other, as members of the same incorporate society.

1. Then, one principal unity of the Christian church, is the union of all Christians with Christ as supreme head and governor. All Christians become one body, by *one spirit*, as they receive *one Lord*, profess *one faith*, are consecrated by *one baptism*, to the service and worship of the *one God* and father of all, as they are called in *one hope* of their calling.† When then we sincerely believe in Christ

I i 2

Jesus

* *Hale's Tracts* 194.

† *Ephes. iv. 4, 6.*

Jesus the Lord and receive him as God's Anointed, whom he has sanctified to save us from our sins, and whom he has invested with supreme power and authority, as head over all things to the church; when we profess this faith in sincerity, when we aim with an upright heart, to make good this profession in all things by obedience to the directions, orders, and rules of Christ's gospel; we then *believe with the heart unto righteousness, and make confession with the mouth unto salvation.** Then we are, according to the gospel of Christ, which is the charter of his church, received into it, and have a right by it, to all the privileges, blessings, and grace promis'd to God's peculiar and favour'd people. This is the unity and communion of the *true Catholick* church, which is not improperly call'd the internal communion of the invisible church.

But if we continue not in this faith, and obedience of the gospel of Christ; if we *refuse to walk in Christ Jesus the Lord, as we have received him*; † if we virtually renounce our allegiance to him, as our supreme head and governor; we thereby separate ourselves from *this unity* of his body, and are separated from this internal communion of the invisible church: We continue not in the goodness of God, and in his favour, but forfeit all right to the blessings which the charter of Christ's gospel has made the peculiar privileges of his church. This is a behaviour truly schismatical, and so contrary to all the obligations and duty of a Christian, expresses so high disobedience to Christ and his gospel, that it must be esteem'd a sin of most dangerous consequence.

2. We are further to observe, there is another unity of the Christian church, whereby the members of it are united to each other. Love and charity are essential precepts of true religion; Christ has

* Rom. x. 10.

† Coloss. v. 6.

has made the love of Christians to each other the distinguishing character of his disciples; this is that *bond of perfectness*, by which the several members of the Christian church are most perfectly united to each other.

An *unity of opinion* in all points, an *uniform practice* in all things, an *union of government* under one universal head of the church, as vicar of Christ upon earth, cannot be necessary to the union of all Christians among themselves. The wisdom of God never made that *necessary*, which the nature of things, and constant experience of the world, shew to be *impracticable*. That all Christians then should agree in points uncertain and doubtful, or be united in submission to an authority without all reason, and against many evident and important reasons, can never be the bond of Catholick communion, can never be that *perfect bond of unity* which is able to unite *all true Christians* among themselves.

But *all Christians* may be united in affection and brotherly love: these are duties certainly required of every Christian; these are proper means by which the peace, the honour, the perfection of the Christian church, as a religious society, will be greatly promoted. It must be then a very great Christian duty, an important part of obedience to the Christian faith, to keep this *unity of the spirit in the bond of peace*. All therefore, who from pride and ambition, from covetousness and private interest, from envy or revenge, from angry passion or unfociable temper, shall be the uncharitable cause of contentions and divisions in the Christian church, and bring upon it all the disorder and evils that seldom fail to follow such uncharitable divisions, must be guilty of a very grievous sin: a sin so dangerous to the peace, honour, and perfection of the church, we may well fear threatens a loss of the privileges of the true church. There is

I i 3

great

great reason to fear that Christ, the true head of the church, will treat them as *aliens and strangers to the covenant of promise*, who will not walk in love as fellow-citizens with the saints. Uncharitable contentions and divisions seem to have run their full length. When Christians shall refuse to join with each other in worshipping the one God and Father of them all, or in the service of the one Lord, their common Saviour and head; when they shall excommunicate and anathematize each other; when Christians shall come to so high a degree of uncharitableness as to *hate* their fellow Christians more heartily than they *love* their God and Saviour, than they regard the peace, the honour, or the happiness of their church; then sure they are justly chargeable with the guilt of schism. They have reason to fear all the evils that follow upon it, the righteous punishment of so great, so grievous a sin. I proceed,

II. To shew *what* reasons Protestants have to charge the principles of Popery as schismatical, so that the great danger of schism will be found in the communion of the *Roman* church, and not in the communion of the Reformed churches. It is a plain and sure truth, * “The schism is theirs, whose the cause of it is; and he makes the separation, that gave the first just cause of it; not he that makes an actual separation, upon a just cause first given.” Or, † “a culpable breach of the church’s unity is, what is properly meant by the true nature of schism.”

The question then, whether the principles of Popery are schismatical may be brought to this plain issue; Whether the church of *Rome* imposing the profession and practice of great errors and corruptions on persons, who could not profess and practise them without danger of cutting them-

* Archbishop *Laud* against *Fisher*, S. 21. N. 6. p. 92.

† *Dodwell* on Schism, p. 568.

themselves off from the communion of the true church with Christ the head, and without damnable sin, and yet uncharitably excommunicating and cutting off from her communion all who refuse to comply with her corruptions, is not the real cause of a very grievous schism in the church of Christ? To make good this charge I would observe,

1. The church of *Rome* requires the profession and practice of great errors, and dangerous corruptions. It is not my province to consider these errors and corruptions in particular; several able hands have considered them already, and proved them on the church of *Rome* with full evidence, and I hope to your full satisfaction. It will be sufficient for our present purpose to observe, that the Popish doctrine of infallibility has taken away the very foundation of *Christian faith*, together with all authority of the word of God, which only can be the foundation of a *divine* faith; and really leaves no foundation for the faith of the Christian church, but the authority of fallible men. The church of *Rome*, by taking away the use of the scriptures from the common people, hath taken away the key of knowledge; and by directing the use of an unknown tongue in their prayers, will not permit men to worship God with understanding. By the doctrines of absolution and purgatory, the *Roman* church teaches men a way, how they may hope for the salvation of God at the last, though they live in sin, nay even though they die in their sins. The doctrines of this church ascribe such power and authority to the Pope, as leave no power, no authority to Christ himself: in virtue of this usurped authority, the church of *Rome* adds her own constitutions to the institutions of Christ, and makes them of as binding obligation as his; assumes a power

to set aside and over-rule them, and even to make decrees in direct contradiction to Christ's own express constitutions. They have thus taken away one half of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, with an express *notwithstanding* to the allowed institution of the cup; they have chang'd the other half from one of the plainest rites in the world, into a doctrine full of all manner of absurdity and contradiction; as if they thought themselves at full liberty to deprive men of reason and of common sense, as well as of faith. Besides the infinite superstitions they have introduced in room of the most reasonable service, they have brought their whole worship, on many accounts, into great danger of plain idolatry, in the worship of angels and saints, of bread, and the relicks of dead men, and even of images, against which there is so full and express a prohibition in the law of God.

2. It is further to be observ'd, the *Roman* church has made all these errors and corruptions *necessary terms of her communion*. She has bound them on the faith and practice of every one of her members, by her full authority, and by the solemn decisions of her general councils. These errors and corruptions are incorporated into the most solemn acts of worship, and the members of the *Roman* church are obliged to *approve* them as well as to *use* them. There is a remarkable decree of the council of *Trent* to this purpose, with respect to all the corruptions of their pretended seven sacraments: "If any one shall say that Christ did not institute all the sacraments of the new law, or that they are more or less than seven, or that any one of the seven is not truly and properly a sacrament, let him be anathema."* So they require

* Si quis dixerit sacramenta novæ legis non fuisse omnia à Jesu Christo domino nostro instituta, aut esse plura vel pauciora quam septem,

require “ a full approbation of all the receiv’d
 “ and approved rites the church is accustomed to
 “ use in the solemn administration of them.” †
 Thus the *Roman* church has taken effectual care,
 that every one must have communion with her in
 her errors and corruptions, or have no communi-
 on with her at all. Pope *Boniface VIII.* expressly
 declared, accordingly, “ that obedience to the
 “ bishop of *Rome* was absolutely necessary to sal-
 “ vation.” ‡

3. It is yet further to be observed, the *Roman* church imposes these corruptions with a most *un-charitable rigor* : she excommunicates and anathematizes, and persecutes to ruin and destruction with a merciless cruelty, all who refuse a full and intire submission to them. The creed of Pope *Pius IV.* now in use for receiving of converts into the *Roman* church, requires, after a profession of the several doctrines *that* church teaches in particular, this further general profession : “ I likewise
 “ undoubtedly receive and profess all other things
 “ delivered, defined, and declared by the sacred
 “ canons and general councils, and particularly
 “ by the holy council of *Trent* ; and I condemn,
 “ reject, and anathematize all things contrary there-
 “ to, and all heresies which the church has condemn-
 “ ed, rejected, and anathematized. I do, at this pre-
 “ sent, freely profess, and sincerely hold this true Ca-
 “ tholick

septem, videlicet, Baptismum, Confirmationem, Eucharistiam, Penitentiam, Extremam Unctionem, Ordinem, & Matrimonium, aut etiam aliquod horum septem non esse verè & propriè sacramentum, anathema sit. *Concil. Trident. S. 7. 3. Martii, 1547. Can. 1.*

† Si quis dixerit receptos & approbatos & ecclesiæ Catholicæ ritus in solemnī sacramentorum administratione adhiberi consuetos, aut contemni, aut sine peccato à ministris pro libito omitti, aut in novos alios per quemcunque ecclesiarum pastorem mutari posse, anathema sit. *16. Can. 13.*

‡ Porro subesse Romano pontifici, omni humanæ creaturæ (or omnem humanam creaturam, *as others read it*) declaramus, dicimus, definimus, & pronunciamus, omnino esse de necessitate salutis. *Bonifacius 8. Extravag. Com. Tit. viii. c. 1. de majoritate & obedientia.*

“ tholick faith, without which no one can be
“ saved.”

So uncharitable are the principles of Popery; they pass a sentence of excommunication and damnation against all who will not submit to their dangerous corruptions; and the *Roman* church requires all the members of her communion, to receive those uncharitable principles as a *part of their religion*, and to join with them in their curses and anathema's, as well as in their errors.

4. The *Roman* church most uncharitably imposes the profession and practice of their errors and corruptions on persons, who cannot profess and practise them, without manifest danger of cutting themselves off from the communion of the true church with Christ the head, and *without damnable sin*. Had their errors and corruptions been of much less evil and dangerous consequence than they really are; yet persons who knew them to be errors, who were fully convinced in conscience they were corruptions, could not profess to believe them, could not practise them without plain hypocrisy and evident falshood, which are inconsistent with the faith and obedience of the gospel of Christ, and are in themselves damnable sins. For, as one well observes,*
“ God, the eternal truth, neither can nor will
“ oblige us to believe any the least or most inno-
“ cent falshood, to be a divine truth, that is, to
“ err; nor to profess a known error which is, to
“ lie: so that if you require the belief of *any* er-
“ ror among the *conditions* of your communion,
“ our *obligation* to communicate with you ceaseth,
“ and so the imputation of schism to us vanisheth
“ into nothing, but lies heavy upon *you* for ma-
“ king our separation from you just and necessary,
“ by requiring *unnecessary* and *unlawful* conditions
“ of

* *Chillingworth's* answer to the preface, §. 22.

“ of your communion.” Not therefore to forsake the errors of the *Roman* church, believing them to be errors, or “ not to forsake the practice and profession of them, says the same great author, had been damnable hypocrisy, supposing (which you vainly run away with and take for granted,) that those errors in themselves were not damnable.” *

This plain reason made it necessary for all persons, who were sensible of the errors and corruptions of Popery, to separate from the external communion of the *Roman* church, because they could not possibly continue in it without falsehood and dishonesty, lying and hypocrisy, which to be sure are *damnable sins* in themselves. But a proof so plain and decisive as this must not pass without some distinction or exception, that may some way darken or perplex it. It is therefore said, though possibly this plea may justify a *negative* separation or non-communication with the church of *Rome*, in things which we cannot profess and practise without hypocrisy, yet it will not justify a *positive* separation, or joining with other separate communions, and setting up altar against altar. A little attention may serve I think to shew the insufficiency and weakness of this exception.

For first, this exception seems to allow, what the principles of the *Roman* communion will not really allow upon any terms. Popery condemns negative separation, or non-communication upon every pretence, as much as positive separation, or joining with separate communions; for as the great *Chillingworth* observes, “ the condition of your communion is, that we must profess to believe all your doctrines, not only *not to be damnable errors*, (which will not content you) but also to be *certain and necessary and revealed truths*: ---- to pretend that there are errors in your
“ church,

* Id. Ibid.

“ church, tho’ not damnable, is *ipso facto* to forsake your communion, and to do that which both in your account, and as you think in God’s account, puts him that does so out of your communion : ”* so that this proof remains firm against the *real principles* of the church of *Rome*, any thing in this exception to the contrary notwithstanding.

Besides, the worship of God is a first and principal duty of the law of nature and of all religion: to worship God according to the directions of the Christian revelation, is a chief duty of Christianity. Is it possible then a doctrine so uncertain and doubtful, so erroneous and false, as the Pope’s supreme authority over the whole Christian church, should null and make void the chief and most sacred obligations of the Christian revelation, and the eternal laws of natural religion? Is it possible any authority can proceed from *God*, and *Christ*, which shall lay an obligation on *Christians*, not to worship God according to the Christian revelation, in any other way than such, in which they cannot worship God without damnable sin: this is in effect to lay an obligation on Christians not to worship God at all.

Finally, this exception, instead of mending the matter, really makes it worse. If this doctrine could be true, that Christians were not to join in any separate communion from the church of *Rome* to worship God, tho’ they cannot have communion with the church of *Rome*, without damnable sin; this would put them under a necessity of sinning either way; *either* by worshipping God in the church of *Rome*, or by not worshipping God as Christians at all. This shews the principles of the church of *Rome* most highly schismatical and uncharitable.

They

* *Chillingworth’s* answer to the preface, §. 81.

They lay men of conscience and honesty, if they are to follow this doctrine, under an hard necessity of sinning which way soever they act. They neither permit men of conscience to have communion with their church, nor suffer them to have communion with any other part of the Christian church throughout the whole world: this appears in the highest sense a culpable breach of the church's unity, which is the true notion of schism.

If then the *guilt* of schism is chargeable upon those who are the *cause* of it; Papists have taken great care to make the decision of this question between us and them evident and plain, by the numerous and important errors and corruptions of their communion, by the obstinate, rigorous and uncharitable spirit with which they impose them.

5. We are farther to observe, there is one great error of Popery, a principal foundation of its other corruptions, which is directly schismatical in the most dangerous sense, as it breaks the unity and communion of the church with Christ the true head of it. Many particular corruptions of the *Roman* church are very important, such as greatly affect the faith, the worship, and the practice of Christianity and true religion in many of the chief and more necessary points. But this great error I am speaking of, this fundamental corruption, as I may call it, of the *Roman* church, is virtually *denying Christ Jesus the head, and renouncing allegiance to him*: that power and authority which the Pope claims as Christ's pretended vicar is subversive of all Christ's own authority, as lawgiver and head of his church. For the Pope claims and exercises a power to make what new laws he pleases, to give an authoritative interpretation of all scripture, and so decisively fix the meaning of every law of Christ, and thereby to make it mean what-soever

soever he will, and on occasion to alter and change the laws of Christ as he shall see fit, even with a * *non obstante* to Christ's own allow'd institutions. This is a claim of power to set aside the *one Lord*, as well as to change the *one faith* of the Christian church. In Christ's kingdom it is an *overt-act of rebellion*, it is not only *contriving* and *attempting* to *depose* Christ Jesus from his sovereign authority; but as far as this power of Popery can reach, it does *actually depose* him and *renounce allegiance* to him. Is there not all reason to fear, that they who withdraw themselves from the *allegiance* due to their only sovereign Lord, do thereby put themselves out of *his protection*, and cut themselves off from all the privileges and blessings which belong to faithful subjects. What then can the external communion of any church avail men, when by not *holding the one head, Christ Jesus the Lord*, they have separated themselves from the internal communion of the church with him, through whom all the goodness and the grace of God are communicated to it. Let then schism be as grievous a sin as words can represent, and of as dangerous consequence as Papists teach, when they would frighten Protestants with the apprehensions of it; let it be † “ an offence so grievous, that
 “ nothing does so much incense God --- that no re-
 “ formation can be so important as the sin of schism
 “ is pernicious ---- that no multitude of good
 “ works, no moral honesty of life, no cruel death,
 “ endured

* Licet Christus post cœnam instituerit & suis discipulis administraverit, sub utraque specie panis & vini hoc venerabile sacramentum, tamen *hoc non obstante* sacrorum canonum autoritas & approbata consuetudo ecclesiæ servavit & servat, quod hujusmodi sacramentum non conficiatur post cœnam, nec sumatur à non jejunis----quod à conficientibus sub utraque specie, & à laicis tantummodo sub specie panis suscipiatur.--- Item præcipimus sub pœna excommunicationis, quod nullus presbyter communicet populum sub utraque specie panis & vini. *Concil. Constat. §. 12.*

† Knott in *Chillingworth*, c. 5. §. 7. and 56.

“ endured even for the profession of some article
 “ of faith, can excuse any one who is guilty of
 “ that sin from damnation.” Yet all this guilt
 and danger is only chargeable, where the profes-
 sion and practice of known errors and corruptions,
 that is, where falsehood and hypocrisy, damnable
 sins, are imposed as necessary terms of Christian
 communion; not where this gives a just and ne-
 cessary cause of separation.

The greatest danger of all in schism, is to be cut
 off from the unity of the catholick church, by not
holding the head, in departing from the faith and
 obedience of the gospel. It is very far from cer-
 tain, that to separate from the external communion
 of the *Roman* church is to separate from Christ’s
 vicar: it is more certain that Christ has no vicar
 upon earth, at least, that no *vicar of Christ* can
 have *those powers*, which the Popes claim and exer-
 cise: but this is still more certain, that to commu-
 nicate with the church of *Rome*, in her corrupti-
 ons, knowing them to be so, is to separate ourselves
 from *Christ himself*, the real head of the church,
 by departing from the faith and obedience of his
 gospel.

I proceed in the

III^d Place to shew the weakness and fallacy of
 those arguments by which the church of *Rome* en-
 deavours to vindicate herself from the charge of
 schism, and to prove the guilt of schism on the
 Protestant Reformation.

* “ Jesus Christ, they tell us, has always a true
 “ church upon earth---which true church of Christ
 “ is one---always holy in her doctrines and terms of
 “ communion, and always free from pernicious er-
 “ rors---that Catholicks, and not Protestants, are
 “ this true church of Christ. For the true church
 “ of Christ, they say, can be no other than the
 “ Catholick,

* Grounds of Catholick Doctrine, c. 1.

“ Catholick, which alone has always had a visible
 “ being in the world ever since Christ’s time; not
 “ the Protestant, or any other modern sect, which
 “ only came into the world since the year 1500;
 “ for those that came into the world fifteen hun-
 “ dred years after Christ, came into the World fif-
 “ teen hundred years too late to be the religion or
 “ church of Christ.” Thus they represent their
 cause in the *Grounds of Catholick doctrine*, lately pub-
 lish’d for the use of converts. It may not be amiss here
 to make one general observation, that our charge of
 schismatical principles on the *Roman* church, has
 a plain and easy proof founded on evident
 facts, which the *Roman* church itself has taken
 care to confirm by her own solemn decrees and ana-
 themas in the council of *Trent*; and the *Roman*
 church seems to admit, if we can prove such im-
 position of error and corruption as we charge the
 church of *Rome* with, it will justify the charge of
schism; because they place their defence in denying
all error and corruption in their doctrine and terms
 of communion. Whereas the vindication of the
 church of *Rome*, and her charge of schism on the
 Protestant Reformation, are built upon groundless
 suppositions, false assertions, and fallacious inter-
 pretations of scripture; in order to prove, what
 indeed no argument can prove, that the *Roman*
 church has not erred; that in virtue of the pro-
 mises both of the Old and New Testament, she
 was to continue pure and holy in her doctrine and
 terms of communion in all ages, even to the end of
 the world, and consequently could never stand in
 need of a Protestant Reformation. For we see the
Roman church has erred, we see she continues to err,
 we see she remains obstinate and uncharitable in
 her errors; and even her vain pretence, to be
 always unerring, cuts off all hope of her reforma-
 tion.

Now

Now any proof which concludes against plain notorious fact, must be fallacious *somewhere*, though we should not be able to shew precisely *where* the fallacy lay: for we are sure of this, that no arguments whatever can prove what is impossible to be true, as that a fact should be, and yet not be at the same time.

However, the church of *Rome* insists upon it,
 * “ That our Lord Jesus Christ, who cannot tell
 “ us a lie, has promised that his church should *be*
 “ *built upon a rock*; that *the gates of hell*, that is,
 “ the powers of darkness, should never *prevail*
 “ *against it*: † That Christ, who is the *way, the*
 “ *truth, and the life*, has promised to the pastors
 “ and teachers of his church, *to be with them*
 “ *always, even to the end of the world*: ‡ That Christ
 “ has promised to the same teachers to give them
 “ *the spirit of truth*, that he may *abide with them*
 “ *for ever*; ** and that he *shall guide them into all*
 “ *truth*: †† And, in fine, that the church is called
 “ by *St. Paul, the pillar and ground of truth*; ‡‡
 “ therefore she cannot uphold pernicious errors.”
 From these, and some other passages of scripture of
 like sound, Papists infer, “ It is manifest that the
 “ church of Christ (meaning their own communion)
 “ is infallible in all matters relating to faith, so
 “ that she can neither add, nor retrench from what
 “ Christ taught.” It is further asserted, with a
 confidence truly amazing; “ the Protestant religi-
 “ on cannot be true, except the whole scripture
 “ both of the Old and New Testament, from the
 “ beginning to the end, be false, which in so many
 “ places assures us, that the church of Christ
 “ should never go astray---and it is evident there
 “ could be no room for a Reformation of the
 K k “ church

* Grounds of Catholick Doctrine, ib.

† Matt. xvi. 18.

‡ Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

** John xiv. 16, 17.

†† John xvi. 13.

‡‡ 1 Tim. iii. 15.

“ church of Christ, except the church was gone
 “ astray.” *

These several passages of scripture have been often considered at large, and their true meaning vindicated from the fallacious interpretations of the Popish Doctors: my time will only allow some general remarks upon them, which will, however, sufficiently shew, how much they are *mistaken* and really *misinterpreted* by a pretended *infallible* interpreter of scripture. For in the

1st Place, it is far from manifest, that these scriptures, whatever their true meaning may be, give any particular promise or privilege to that part of the church, which communicates with the Pope or bishop of *Rome*. They may full as well mean, those faithful Christians who in all ages withstood the errors and corruptions of Popery; for these faithful witnesses were a *part* of the church of Christ, a *much better part* of it than the *Roman* communion: They were more likely to have their faith and patience supported with encouragements of divine assistance in times of dangerous apostacy, and violent opposition to the cause of truth and Christian liberty. It is certain the Papists themselves will not have these scriptures to mean every part of the Christian church, or indeed any part of it, which is not in communion with them; the scriptures no where shew they intend these privileges, whatever they may be, for the *Roman* communion, more than for the *Greek*. The scriptures no where intimate the bishop of *Rome* has a greater interest in these promises than the bishops of *Constantinople*, *Alexandria*, *Antioch*, or *Jerusalem*. Indeed the church of *Rome* has shewn manifestly by her corruptions, she has as little pretence to such privileges,
 as

* Roman Catholick's Reasons why he cannot conform to the Protestant Religion, p. 2.

as any known part of the Christian church throughout the whole world.

2dly, We further observe, it is far from manifest, that these scriptures promise *unerring perfection* to *any part* of the church at all. What promise is contained in these scriptures, that any church shall be infallible in all matters relating to faith, so that it can neither add, nor retrench from what Christ has taught? It is so far from being manifest, that this is the true meaning of these scriptures, that plain, constant, and evident experience manifestly shews, it is not, and cannot be the true meaning of them. Indeed the full meaning of them is answered in these two things:

1. In such revelation of God's will, by the Spirit of truth, as shall always direct the church into the knowledge of all truth necessary to salvation: this is always done by the holy scriptures, the oracles of truth, in which every Christian has the spirit of truth which inspired the apostles, guiding them into all truth of the Christian revelation; except however the *Roman* church, which seems resolved these promises shall not, in this sense at least, belong to her, by denying the use of the scriptures to those who are in her communion.

2. The fullest meaning of these scriptures is answered, by a continual protection of God's providence and gracious assistance, of his holy Spirit, which shall preserve his church in this world, so that the profession of the Christian faith shall be maintain'd in every age; that notwithstanding all opposition of error or wickedness, some shall be found faithful, some shall hold and profess the chief

and essential truths of the Christian faith, which shall be sufficient to shew the true way of salvation, as made known in the Christian revelation. But does this promise any ways teach us, that they who hold all necessary truth cannot possibly fall into any error? Does this prove, for instance, that the church of *Rome* cannot possibly add some of her own *inventions* to the doctrines of *God's revelation*? that she can never teach for doctrines the commandments of *men*, as well as the commandments of *God*? or even when she holds the *truth*, that she may not hold it in *unrighteousness*? or, in a word, do these scriptures prove, that the church of *Rome* cannot possibly do what most certainly she has done?

Thus all these scriptures are a groundless and a false foundation for the Popish claim of unerring perfection; for they promise no particular privilege to the *Roman* church above other churches, nor do they promise unerring perfection to any church at all. Still the Popish doctors have further pleas in reserve, to make these scriptures mean what they would have them, whatever their true meaning may be, by contending, * “ We are to
“ take the meaning and interpretation of scrip-
“ ture from the same hand from which we received
“ the book itself, that is, from the church, and
“ not assume a liberty to interpret scripture ac-
“ cording to our own private judgment.”

I shall not attempt to shew how groundless and false this pretence is; this has been already fully proved to you. I shall only observe one thing, in answer to their harangue, against the liberty Protestants take to interpret the scriptures according to their own *private* judgment.

Protestants modestly own the *fallibility* of their *own* judgment; but they justly lay claim to *sufficient*
certainty

* Grounds of Catholick Doctrine, C. 2. §. 1.

certainty in the *true sense* and *meaning* of the holy scriptures in all things *necessary*. Protestants, though they own they are fallible in many things, and should therefore shew a modesty in their opinions becoming such an acknowledgment; yet they justly assert, there are many things, in which they are *sufficiently certain*, that they are *not mistaken*. They are sufficiently certain that the *Roman church* has erred, that she is no infallible judge of controversies, when she has pronounced so many errors to be doctrines of faith. This is not a pretence to *infallibility*. This is not to oppose the *authority* of private judgment to the publick *authority* of the church. It is only to oppose the *certainty* of *divine revelation*, to the *known corrupt practices* of the *Roman communion*, in things wherein the practice of the church of *Rome* plainly and evidently opposes the laws and orders of the Christian revelation; this is only to oppose the *commandments* of God to the *doctrines* of men, and the *real authority* of Christ the one Lord, to the *usurped authority* of his pretended vicar: and every one must have authority from God himself to do what God himself requires of him as his duty, *to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good.* *

After all that can be said on this argument, it will remain a sure and evident truth, that every man's *own judgment*, upon an honest and careful inquiry how he is to walk and please God, is *his conscience*; in following which he will always walk before God with an upright heart, and serve him with godly sincerity; and so far must do that which is good and right in the sight of God: but for a man to act contrary to *his conscience*, is not to serve God with an upright heart; it is to walk before him in falsehood and hypocrisy, and therefore to do

K k 3

that

that which certainly is evil in his sight; for *lying lips are always an abomination unto the Lord.*

It is therefore highly unreasonable and extravagant to demand, as the *Roman* church does, that Protestants ought to *rectify* their consciences and *submit* them to the *authority* of their church; and rather believe the church of *Rome* cannot err, because *she* says so; than that *she* has erred, tho' *they* see her errors with their own eyes. This is not to *rectify* conscience, but to *destroy* it. It requires men to act against all rules of reason, honesty and religion, to sacrifice sincerity and good conscience, to injustice and oppressive power. In such cases, to use the words of a great man, "Consent would be conspiracy, and open contestation is not faction or schism, but due Christian animosity." *

Yet still the *Roman* church insists, "that the *true church* of Christ can be no other than the *catholick*, which alone has had a *visible being* in the world, ever since Christ's time; not the Protestant or any other modern sect, which only came into the world since 1500; for those that came into the world 1500 years after Christ came into the world 1500 years too late to be the religion or church of Christ." † Hence they would infer, that Protestants by separating from the church of *Rome*, separated from the true church of Christ, and therefore must be guilty of schism. They ask with an air of triumph, "Where was the Protestant religion before *Luther* and *Calvin*?" and too often impose upon the weak and the injudicious by their confident assertion, that the Protestant religion had no being till fifteen hundred years after Christ.

But I hope one plain and easy observation will abate this confidence, and be sufficient to shew the weakness and falshood of this assertion. We are

to

* *Hale's Tracts*, 194.

† *Grounds of catholick doctrine*, c. 1.

to consider two things in the Protestant reformation, which are very different from each other; the one, the *doctrines* which the Protestant reformation restored to their original purity; the other, the *free profession* of these doctrines, and *open separation* from the communion of the church of *Rome*, on account of them.

1. If we consider the *doctrines* the Protestant reformation restored to their original purity, they are the very doctrines taught by Christ and his apostles. These doctrines ever were in the Bible, where the Popish corruptions of them never were. These doctrines are so far from coming first into the world 1500 years after Christ, that they justly claim the highest and most venerable antiquity, and the Protestant doctrine in the most essential points is only returning to the pure faith and worship of the apostolical church.

2. If we consider the Protestant reformation as a *free profession* of these doctrines, and an *open separation* from the communion of the church of *Rome*, on account of them: we must indeed confess, that the church of *Rome* had long prevailed to hinder a free profession of the truth against her errors and corruptions, by all the cruel and oppressive methods of persecution. The righteous and wise providence of God, tho' in many things to us unsearchable, permitted her to *make war with the saints and to overcome them*.^{*} There were indeed many persons in every age, and in most parts of Europe, who all along *protested* against the usurped power, the principal errors and corruptions of the *Roman* church; but they were *as witnesses prophesying in sackcloth*; † they were persecuted and killed, wherever the power of the *Roman* church could reach them. Of this we have clear evidence, in the known histories of

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Clyde

* Rev. xiii. 7.

† Rev. xi. 3.

Claude of Turin, Berenger, and their disciples; of the Albigenſes and Waldenſes; of Wickleſſ, John Huſs, Jerome of Prague, their followers and others; ſo that all along, to the time of the reformation, there has been a cloud of witneſſes proteſting againſt the corruptions of Popery, and even ſealing their teſtimony with their blood. It was not indeed till about the year 1500, that God was pleaſed to raiſe up men of faithfulneſs and zeal, and in ſuch ſufficient numbers, that they were able to protect themſelves in a free and open profeſſion of truth againſt the oppreſſive power of the Roman church. So that the whole of this boaſt, (Where was the Proteſtant religion before Luther?) amounts to no more than this; God permitted the church of Rome long to oppoſe and perſecute truths as ancient as the Bible, as the faith and practice of the apoſtles; till at length the good providence of God bleſſed many churches with free liberty to profeſs with ſafety the truths and practice of the moſt antient Chriſtian church. As then we ought to be ſenſible, how much we are indebted to the goodneſs of God, that the Proteſtant reformation began ſo ſoon as it did; we ought alſo to charge it as the great and grievous ſin of the Roman church, that it began no ſooner.

Hence finally we may obſerve, with what groundleſs confidence Papiſts aſſert, *their communion is the ſafer*, in the judgment of Proteſtants themſelves; becauſe “ Proteſtants, they ſay, own the “ *Roman* church wants nothing neceſſary to ſalvation; whereas the *Roman* church with unanimous conſent believes and profeſſes, that Proteſtancy unrepented of deſtroys ſalvation.” * For it is manifeſt, that Proteſtants allow no ſuch thing, as that the communion of Papiſts is a ſafer way to ſalvation, than the communion of the Reformed churches. Proteſtants maintain, and prove, that the

* Knott in Chillingworth, c. 7. §. 6.

the *Roman* communion holds many very dangerous errors and corruptions, together with the fundamental articles of the Christian faith; that these errors and corruptions are of so dangerous nature and consequence, as greatly to *hazard salvation*. In particular, we have seen the church of *Rome* is in very great danger of being cut off from the communion of the true church of Christ, by her schismatical principles: so far are we from allowing there is *greater safety* in the church of *Rome*, that we evidently prove there is *incomparably more danger and hazard of being saved* in the *Roman* communion, than in the communion of the Reformed Churches.

We have now seen one instance more of the errors and corruptions of Popery, and therein a further instance of our happiness in the Protestant Reformation. Let us consider what remains our care and duty to *improve* it. With what thankfulness and gratitude are we to own the goodness of God, which has bestowed so great a blessing upon us; which has continued it to us by so many kind and wonderful providences; and which, we hope, designs to perpetuate this blessing to us by the happy provision of a *Protestant* succession to our *British* crown: let us shew our thankfulness for this goodness of God, by an hearty and affectionate zeal for the security of *that government*, which, under God, is the *only visible* security of our happiness as a Protestant nation.

Let us not terrify ourselves with any groundless fears of danger in our separation from the *Roman* communion, in which there is so plain and evident danger of separating ourselves from Christ Jesus the head of the church, and of incurring the guilt of damnable sin; as we cannot profess and practise her errors and corruptions without falshood and hypocrisy, which are damnable sins.

But

But let us at the same time be watchful against the danger of schismatical principles, and a schismatical temper in ourselves. We may fully prove the church of *Rome* to be schismatical, and yet be unable to vindicate ourselves, and our own conduct from the same charge. It is more than possible there may be angry passions, uncharitable tempers, and unchristian animosities on both sides of a question. When these shall be truly chargable on both sides, neither side can be excused from the imputation of schismatical principles more or less. Let us be careful to wipe off from ourselves, as Protestants, this imputation, that we cannot avoid one. “note of
 “schism at least, by reason of our own mutual
 “quarrels and contentions.”* We are to *contend earnestly for the faith, and stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free*: that is our duty as Christians: nor can we have a cause more just and glorious in itself, or of more important concern to our own interests, than the cause of religious truth and liberty: but we are also to *keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace*, which is our duty as much as the other. Let us religiously avoid all groundless jealousy, all uncharitable interpretation, and all unchristian censure of each other’s actions: let us defend the truth with modesty, temper, and charity; and neither the cause of truth, nor the honour of the Protestant Reformation, will suffer by the management. But if we contend even for the truth with pride, passion and uncharitableness, we shall disserve the truth, and dishonour ourselves: this will make it appear to the observing and the wise, that we have learned a skill of being in the wrong, at the same time we have a right cause to defend; and that we have found out an art, when we are disputing for religion, to lose our own religion in the dispute. Shall a spirit of ambition and worldly interest firmly unite our enemies against us, and shall

* Knott in Chillingworth, c. 5. §. 38.

not the honour of God, and the spirit of Christianity, as firmly unite us in the cause of truth and religion, against so great and dangerous corruptions of both? To conclude,

Let us principally aim, by the grace of God, to improve the invaluable blessing of the Reformation, by a more constant and powerful influence of the excellent principles of the true Christian faith and practice on our hearts and lives, that we may grow in *every* grace of a true Christian, as well as in the *true knowledge* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; that we may be better prepared for a more perfect state of the church, than we can hope to enjoy in this world; and that we may at the last attain the full communion of the glorious church above, in its heavenly state of perfection and happiness.

Let this doctrine then excite in us a more serious care to preserve the hopes and privileges of the true church of God to ourselves, to prevent the *slights of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive*, * from prevailing over us: let the danger of being cut off from the privileges and blessings of the church of God, in separating ourselves from Christ the head, by departing from the faith and obedience of his gospel, make us tremble at the thoughts of Popery; which imposes the profession and practice of such errors and corruptions as must greatly expose us to the guilt of hypocrisy and damnable sin, to the danger of being cut off from the internal communion of the Catholick church: let it be our constant care to know the mind of Christ better, from his own word of revelation: let us receive all his doctrines, directions, rules, and orders, with religious reverence and affection: let us consider them, on the one hand, as the laws of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and on the other hand, as the means of his grace, to bring us to his glory:

let

* Ephes. iv. 14.

let every thing have the authority and obligation of religion with us, which Christ has made a part of his religion: then will our religion be a fair image of God's perfection, a conformity to the doctrine and the life of Christ in all goodness, righteousness, and true holiness; then we shall *continue in the goodness of God*, and finally attain that *eternal glory unto which he has called us by Christ Jesus, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.*

PER-

PERSECUTION *and* CRUELTY in the
Principles, Practices, and Spirit of
the Romish Church.

A
S E R M O N

PREACH'D AT

Salters-Hall, April 10, 1735.

By B. GROSVENOR, D.D.

*Longe diversa sunt carnificina & pietas ; nec potest veritas cum vi, aut
justitia cum crudelitate conjungi.* LACT. i. 5.

Infinitely more Christian Blood having been shed by the Papal Empire, and its agents, for not complying with the idolatry of its worship, than ever was shed by Rome Heathen.

Dr. GEDDES, V. III. *Essay* VI.

JOHN xvi. 2.

*They shall put you out of the synagogues ; yea,
the time cometh that whosoever killeth you
will think that he doeth God service.*

TH E S E words may be considered as a *prophecy*, or as a *caution*. As a prophecy they have been dreadfully fulfilled, by persecutors in all ages ; in defiance of the caution contained in them. As a caution, they are entered against the most plausible pretence for persecution

tion in the world; viz. *thinking they do God service*. For if any thing in the world could sanctify so wicked a thing as persecution, it would be the thinking to do God service thereby. But this caution is added here, to prevent any man's thinking so.

I am sorry it has had so little effect: so little, that men have rather seemed intent upon fulfilling the prophecy, than observing the caution; as if they concluded, that *killing men*, if it was not indeed *serving God*, yet it was serving the church, and that would content them as well: or else, might one not have expected that these words of Christ should have prevented a great deal of mischief that has been done in the world? Are they not spoken with an air of indignation, at so unnatural a conceit, and so vile a practice? A practice declared here, by Christ, to proceed from ignorance of God and Christ, *ver. 3. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father nor Me. q.d.* "They know nothing of the goodness of the Father, or the grace of the Son. If they knew God, they would know, that he *desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he would turn and live*. If they knew Christ, they would know, that the *Son of man came not into the world to destroy mens lives, but to save*. If they knew any thing of natural or revealed religion, they would know, that both concur in that golden rule, of *doing to others as we would be done unto*."

But instead of that, these sons of violence have all along acted, as if Christ had said --- *These things they will do, because I have given them commission so to do; as if they had a commission for doing that which, Christ says, they will do, because they know not the Father nor him*. It appears then, that

Persecution proceeds from an ignorance of God and religion.* Ignorance and cruelty go together, and are a support to each other; they are *the dark places of the earth*, that are full of the habitations of cruelty, and will be cruel, as long as they remain dark; and are kept dark, that they may continue cruel. Ill-nature, interest, love of plunder, or of dominion, have their share in the business of persecution, no doubt; but ignorant zeal will go a great way in it, where there is not so much malignity; as will appear in two instances I will present you with.

The one is of *Saul*, Acts xxvi. 9. *I verily thought that I ought to do many things, contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which things I also did at Jerusalem: many of the saints I shut up in prison, having authority from the chief priests: and when they were put to death I gave my Voice against them; and I punished them in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme: and being extremely MAD against them, I persecuted them to strange cities.* He calls it MADNESS here, and imputes it to ignorance elsewhere, 1 Tim. i. 13. *I did it ignorantly--- I was injurious, and a persecutor.* Paul the Christian condemns what was done by Saul the Jew, and owns it was injurious; notwithstanding he verily thought he ought to do many such things, and notwithstanding his authority from the high-priest.---- How far ignorance will excuse, and whether a man acts from ignorance or malignity, God is the judge.

The other instance is *Luther*: in the days of his ignorance he owns himself a mad persecutor.---- In the preface to his Works he says, *Above all things I request the pious reader, and beseech him, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, that he read my books with judgment, and with much pity; and let him remember that I was once a Monk, and a mad Papist. And*
when

* Psalm. liii. 1. *Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge, who eat up my people as they eat bread?*

*when I first undertook this cause, I was so drunk, and drowned, with the Popish doctrine, that I was ready, if I could, to have KILLED ALL MEN, or to have assisted others in doing so, who withdrew their obedience from the Pope but in one syllable.**

Too much of the principles and spirit of persecution came over with the Reformers themselves: nor could that leaven presently be worked out. *Luther* was against putting false teachers to death, afterward; but he was for almost all other punishments the magistrate could inflict. *Calvin* was a man of excellent learning, piety, and parts; the Reformation owed a great deal to his diligence, courage, and fine pen: but he wrote a treatise of the lawfulness of putting hereticks to death; and made the best defence he could for the hand he had in an instance of that nature. *Beza* was a disciple of *Calvin*, and grew up to be as great a man. He wrote in defence of persecution, a treatise, which the Papists knew how to make their advantage of, to the running down of many a poor sufferer.† *Henry* the Eighth, who had so great a hand in shaking off the *Roman* yoke, put men to death for opinions. *Edward* the Sixth was over-persuaded by *Cranmer* to commit some to the flames.----It is pity such lovely names as *Edward* the Sixth, and *Cranmer*, should be mentioned to any disadvantage, in the same line with persecution and blood. The severities in *Queen Elizabeth's* reign, for the sake of uniformity in service and sentiments, were a great blemish to the Protestant name. And if we trace this matter

* Ante omnia oro pium lectorem, & oro propter ipsum Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, ut ista legat cum judicio, imo cum multa miseratione; & sciat me fuisse aliquando Monachum, & Papistam insanissimum; cum istam causam aggressus sum ita ebrium, imo submersum in dogmatibus Papæ, ut paratissimus fuerim, omnes, si potuissem, occidere, aut occidentibus co-operari & consentire, qui Papæ vel una syllaba obedientiam detractarent. *Melchior Adam Vita Luth.*

† Inter *Bezæ* Tractat. Theolog. Impr. 1570. De Hæreticis à magistratu puniendis.

matter farther downwards, we shall find reason to own, that all parties and denominations, in their turn, have had a notion of serving God by doing mischief to men, men who did not know so much, or could not believe as they pleased, or would not lye, in professing to believe what they did not. The proceedings of star-chamber, high-commission, and spiritual Courts, do abundantly shew, that the spirit of the Church, and the Spirit of Christ, are not always the same. We hereby see the power of prépossession, and rooted opinion, that with a Protestant people it should require almost 200 years to get rid of so wicked a principle, and practice, as that of persecution; which is here declared to proceed from ignorance of God and Christ, and elsewhere, from malignity and hatred of goodness; is made the mark of antichrist, or of a false church.

The persecution and cruelty of this false church being my part to consider, I shall give you the *notion* of persecution in general; and make good the *charge* of it upon the *Romish* church, from their *principles, practices, and spirit*; and then close with some remarks.

I. I am to state the *notion* of persecution in general.

My notion of persecution is this---- When a man is hurt in any of his civil rights, without any civil forfeiture or crime, merely on account of the faith he believes, or the worship he practises; when that faith and worship have nothing in them inconsistent with the civil interests of the community, and the peace of the publick; and the man is able and ready to give all legal security to the government for the publick peace.

The use of force, or of pains and penalties, against such persons, merely on account of their religious opinions, by which opinions the civil interests of the society are no ways affected; and the man in

all other respects a good subject ; this is persecution. And this is the case of poor Protestant sufferers, who have nothing in the principles of their religion that should hinder them from being good subjects, where-ever their lot is cast. But can this be pleaded for Papists? those, at least, of them, who avow the *deposing power* and persecuting principles ; or refuse to renounce them ; in such manner as a Protestant state may depend on, if there be any such manner to be found out. The breach of the civil peace deserves the animadversion of the civil power, from whatsoever it proceeds. It's all one to the magistrate, whether such breach of the peace proceeds from a mistaken conscience, or from none at all. His business is to keep the peace, *that under him we may live peaceable and quiet lives in all godliness* ; and consequently, he is to protect every man's liberty of conscience, among other parts of his office ; and *be a terror to those evil doers* who would take away that liberty, where that liberty has no ill effect at all upon the publick peace. A liberty, to which we have a natural right, as men, and reasonable creatures ; a divine right, as Christians ; and a civil right, as *Englishmen* ; so long as none of these rights are forfeited by any opinions, or practices, inconsistent with the common enjoyment of the same rights.

II. I am to make good the *charge* of persecution upon the church of *Rome*.

This may seem a very needless undertaking ; as going about to prove what every body knows ; what is hardly denied by Papists themselves ; unless when they have a proselyte under management, who has more faith in the priests than in the history of all ages ; then, the missionary may venture to say, that the stories of Popish cruelties are all Protestant lies. And yet,

They know where to find those *decrees* of councils,

cils, those *canons* and constitutions of churches, that enjoin upon princes the persecution of their Protestant subjects under the severest penalties. They know that to avoid these penalties, Popish princes have in all ages exercised barbarous cruelties upon their Protestant subjects. They know that their *bishops* at their consecration are sworn, *that they will persecute hereticks to the utmost of their power.** They know that if princes are remiss in the affairs of extirpating such as the church condemns, whether that remissness be from pity, or any remainders of humanity, not quite extinguished by that inhuman religion, they are to be *excommunicated*; and if they persist in their merciful disposition, they are to be *deposed*, and their subjects to be absolved from their oath of allegiance, and their dominions *disposed* of to others, more zealous, and more deserving.

Thus all possible ways are taken to engage all sorts of people into their persecuting measures; clergy, laity, princes and subjects; and therefore those bloody things that have been done by them are not so much the excesses of particular persons, or the sudden transports of provocation, nor the effect of oppression, that sometimes *makes a wise man mad*; but the natural effect of their establish'd doctrines, the *principles* of their religion, and *practice* upon those principles: the *spirit* of Popery itself being cruelty and tyranny; of such a nature, and so circumstanced, that, as it is not *mended* yet, so I do not see how it ever *can be*.---- Of each of these a little, as our time will allow.

§. 1. Persecution of men whose conscience cannot comply with their doctrine and worship, let them be never so good subjects in all other respects, is among the *principles* of their religion.

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* Pontificale Roman. edit. Antwerp. A. D. 1626. One part of the oath is. *Hereticos schismaticos aut rebelles eidem Domino nostro vel successoribus predictis, pro posse persequar & impugnabo.*

It is not only *permitted*, as what *may* be done, but *commanded*, as what *ought* to be done. Not only commanded, but *inforced* by the severest penalties; and encouraged by the greatest privileges. It is a specimen only that I can lay before you,* and for a taste.---- In the fifth council of *Toledo*, Can. 3. the holy fathers say,

We the holy council promulge this sentence, or decree pleasing to God, That whosoever hereafter shall succeed to the kingdom, shall not mount the throne till he has sworn among other oaths, to permit no man to live in his kingdom who is not a Catholic. (NUL-LUM NON CATHOLICUM.) And if after he has taken the reins of government, he shall violate this promise, let him be anathema maranatha in the sight of the eternal God, and become fuel of the eternal fire, (PABULUM IGNIS AETERNI.)†

The council of *Lateran* under Pope *Innocent III.* They say, *We excommunicate, and anathematize all heresy, condemning all hereticks, by what names soever they are called. And if that were all, those would not be much frightened, at being turned out of a wicked church, who see it their duty to come out from amongst them. Rev. xviii. 4.--- But it follows---- These being condemned, must be left to the secular power to be punished.‡ And those who are only suspected of heresy, if they purge not themselves in the appointed way, are to be excommunicated; and if within a year satisfaction is not given, they are to be condemned as hereticks.---- By the same council it is ordained, that ---- the secular powers shall be admonished, and induced, and if need be shall be compelled,*

* They who have a mind, may see a large collection of decrees of councils, canons and constitutions of churches, royal edicts, imperial mandates, and Popes bulls for the extirpating of hereticks; in a book intitled -- *A discourse concerning the laws ecclesiastical and civil made against hereticks* &c. Reprinted in the year 1723.

† Caranza Sum. Conciliorum, p. 404.

‡ Cap. 3. De hereticis, Caranza, p. 602. Anathematis gladio feriantur, & usque ad satisfactionem condignam ab omnibus evitentur.

compelled, by church censures, let them be of what office soever (*cujuscunque officii*;) as they would be counted believers, so for the defence of the faith, they must take this oath----*that they will endeavour, bona fide, and with all their might, to exterminate from every part of their dominions all heretical subjects, universally, that are mark'd out to them by the church. So that from this time forward, when any one is promoted to any power spiritual or temporal, he shall be obliged to confirm this.--- But if any temporal lord, being required and admonished by the church, shall neglect to purge his land from this heretical filthiness, he shall be tied up in the band of excommunication by the metropolitan and his provincial bishops.---- And if he should neglect to make satisfaction within a year, it should be signified to the Pope, that he might from that time pronounce the subjects absolved from allegiance to him, and expose his territories to be seized on by catholicks, who expelling hereticks shall possess them without contradiction.**

You see the penalties for not persecuting Protestants when it is in their power; deposition, and loss of their territories, in this life; and hell-fire in the next.

Let us now take notice of the *privileges* granted to those who do labour in this blessed work of extirpation.---- In the same chapter it is added: *But catholicks, who having taken the badge of the cross, shall set themselves to extirpate hereticks, shall enjoy*

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* Cap. 3. Moneantur autem & inducantur, & si necesse fuerit compellantur, sæculares Potestates, *cujuscunque officii*; etiam sicut reputari cupiunt & haberi fideles -- subjectos universos hæreticos ab ecclesia denotatos, *bona fide, pro viribus* exterminare studeant.-----

Si vero dominus temporalis requisitus, & monitus ab ecclesia, terram suam purgare neglexerit ab hac hæretica scæditate, per metropolitanum & comprovinciales episcopos *excommunicationis vinculo innotetur*. Et si satisfacere contempserit infra annum, significetur hoc summo pontifici, ut ex tunc ipse vasallos ab ejus fidelitate denunciaret absolutos, & terram exponat catholicis occupandam, qui eam, *exterminatis hæreticis, sine ulla contradictione possideant*.

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*the same indulgence, and be fortified with the same privilege, as is granted to those who go to the recovery of the holy land.**

And elsewhere I find a release from penances promised, and a greater degree of everlasting happiness than others may expect.---Such penalties upon the neglect of extirminating hereticks, and such rewards promised for doing it! Is there a religion under the cope of heaven so calculated for spoil, and ruin, and general destruction of peace on earth, and good-will to men, as this?

Since it appears to be a principle of the *Romish* church, that hereticks are to be destroyed, it's time to enquire who are hereticks in their account. --- I have enquired --- and find, that all they who neglect the *authority* of the church, meaning their own church for ever; † all who obstinately defend *wicked opinions*; ‡ of which they will be the only judges; all who refuse to *clear* themselves, upon oath, in answer to all questions; all who think otherwise of the *sacrament* of the body and blood of Christ, or of any other sacrament, or of any other *article* of faith, than their church thinks; all who believe not as the church of *Rome* believes; whosoever shall not obey the Pope's *statutes*, is an heretick; every one who denies the *authority* of a general council to be *derived from Christ*, and that all are to obey it; every one that thinks a general council can *err* in matters that belong to faith and good manners, is to be accounted

* Concil. Lateran. c. 3. De privilegiis concessis catholicis qui hæreticorum exterminio insistant.

N. B. This Lateran council was fully established by that of Trent, and the decrees of it are now in full force at Rome.

Dr. BROUGHTON, in his Great Apostacy, published in the year 1717.

† Catechis. ad Parochos ex Decret. Concil. Trident. & Pii V. Pont. Max. Ludg. 1676.

‡ Concil. Const. Sess. 45.

accounted an heretick.* And, finally, to make sure work of it, all those are hereticks who are not of their *communion*: So that it is in effect to say----that all the world must be destroyed but themselves, to make way for them to possess the earth alone: and truly they went a great way to make this remark literally true with regard to the new world, when first found out; for, according to the account of one of their own bishops, in the space of forty years they destroyed fifty millions of people.† Agreeable to Dr. Geddes's notion of Popery, as a *political combination, managed by falsehood and cruelty, to establish a temporal empire in the person of the Popes*:‡ and I add----under the pretence of another world, to ingross this world to themselves. I proceed to shew,

§. 2. That as persecution of those who differ from them, is their principle, so it has ever been their *practice*, whenever it has been in their power. The thunder of these decrees were usually attended with showers of blood. You can hardly view a spot of ground in the map of *Europe*, that has not been stained with blood of their shedding: you can hardly open an history of any age since the man of sin set up himself *above all that is called God*, without meeting with some bloody tragedy acted upon these principles.

That barbarous decree of the council of *Lateran*, under Pope *Innocent III*, inserted by *Gregory IX*, into the decretals, which is the law of their church, and part of which passes with them for divine law---that barbarous decree, I say, was put in execution in the days of that very Pope; for he employed armies against the *Albigenses* (the predecessors of the Protestants in *France*) who destroyed above

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200,000

* Binn. Tom. 8. p. 128.

† Bishop of *Chiapa*'s account of the cruelty of the Spaniards in *America*.

‡ *Burnet's Hist. Ref. Vol. 3. p. 176.*

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200,000 in the space of some months.* Pope *Julius II.* is said to have occasioned the slaughter of 200,000 Christians in the space of seven years.† *Perionius* avers (as quoted by Dr. *Moor*) that in France alone, in that great persecution against the *Albigenses* and *Waldenses*, there were murdered no less than 1,000,000. From the beginning of the order of the Jesuits, to the year 1580, *Baldwinus* reports, there were about 900,000 of the orthodox Christians murdered; that is, within the space of thirty or forty years. And the *holy inquisition*, as *Vergerius* witnesseth, (one well acquainted therewith) in less than thirty years space, consumed 150,000 with all manner of cruelty!‡ Infomuch that two very learned and judicious persons, Mr. *Joseph Mede*, and Dr. *Geddes*, speaking of the Popish persecutions, the former gives it as his opinion, that the destruction made upon the church by the Papists was equal to that of the first ten Pagan persecutions. Dr. *Geddes* goes further, and asserts, that infinitely more Christian blood has been shed by the papal empire, and its agents, for not complying with the idolatry of its worship, than ever was shed by Rome Heathen.§ In the short reign of Queen *Mary*, Bishop *Burnet* says, there were two hundred and eighty-four burnt, tho' he adds, that *Grindal*, that lived in that time, writes, that in two years eight hundred were burnt, many more imprisoned, 60 died in prison; and others after much cruel usage, *Bonner* himself often disciplining them with whips and tortures, were prevailed on to abjure;

* *Clarkson* in his *Practical Divinity* of Papists destructive of Christianity, p. 206.

Vid. *Jo. Paul.*

Perin. de Albigh.

† Dr. *Moor's* Divine Dialogues.

‡ Dr. *Moor* ubi supra.

Vid. *Limborch's* history of the inquisition translated into English by the Rev. Mr. *S. Chandler.*

§ Dr. *Geddes's* Tracts, Vol. 3. Ess. 6.

jure; but carried in their mind a deep aversion to that cruelty, which had tempted them to such apostacy. † In the massacre of *Paris*, which begun a general slaughter of the Protestants over the kingdom, the number taken off is computed at 100,000. ‡ The horrors of that night are not to be conceived, much less expressed. --- The fatal signal being given by the tolling of the bell of *St. German's*, ---- it was followed with a general rising of the whole city of *Paris*. ---- The march of soldiers, the noise of their arms, and the lighting of so many torches, awaken'd the poor Protestants, who now saw their ruin near and inevitable. --- I draw the curtain over the rest. ---- Protestants cannot well bear to hear what Papists take pleasure in acting. --- For which reason also I shall only mention the gunpowder treason with a short remark. --- It was formed upon these principles of their religion that you have heard. For if the decrees of councils for destroying hereticks be the dictates of the Holy Ghost; if the largest degrees of heavenly happiness come to the share of those who do execute those decrees; if killing men thus beserving God, the more of that work is done at a blow, the more to the purpose of the Holy Ghost, and of his councils and canons. Upon these principles I cannot see, but that if it were lawful to burn them one by one, it was as lawful to blow them up all together. ---- And if it had succeeded, I doubt not but there would have been a thanksgiving for it at *Rome*, as there was for the massacre of *Paris*, and two or three solemn days for that purpose, accompanied with a jubilee to all *Christendom*: for which one of the reasons given was ---- *that they should*

† *Burnet's Abridgment*, p. 328.

‡ *Moor's Dial*.

Vid. Bishop *Burnet's Tracts*. -- A relation of the barbarous and bloody massacre of about an hundred thousand Protestants begun at *Paris* and carried on over all *France* by the Papists in the year 1572, collected out of *Mezeray*, *Thuanus*, and other approved authors.

*should thank God for the slaughter of the enemies of the Church lately executed in France.**

The *Irish* massacre was a bloody sacrifice offered up from the same religion, wherein about 200,000 Protestants were cut off. Some of their priests expressing a little remorse for what they had a hand in, could not obtain absolution without recanting it, and went in the hazard of their lives. †

It will be said these are old stories. --- I answer --- Care has been taken to supply us with new ones, and to renew our alarms by later instances.

The persecution in *France* under *Lewis* the XIVth, who in his minority was saved by his Protestant subjects, is described by an eye-witness ‡ in a manner that would give us too much pain to represent. The principality of *Orange* afterwards felt the meaning of these persecuting principles, when a body of dragoons were let loose upon poor innocent creatures, guilty only of having the prince of *Orange* for their sovereign, and Protestantism for their religion. They were required to abjure, or leave their country and all they had behind them. For tho' it was given
out

* *Burnet's* account, from whence I will add the following passage. --- On the 28th of *August* a jubilee was granted to all who had been in this butchery; and they were commanded to go every where to church, and bless God for the success of that action. So little relenting had they after all these black crimes, that they imagined that they had done God good service: and to that height did their impudence rise, that they presumed to address to that merciful being, who abhors cruel and blood-thirsty men, and that with hands not only defiled with blood, but boasting of it, as a sacrifice offered to God; which had been a fitter oblation to him that was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, than the God of truth and father of mercies.

The Pope sent Cardinal *Ursin* his legat to *France* to thank the king for so great service done to the church, and to desire him to go on, and extirpate heresy root and branch, that it might never grow again. --- And as the legat passed through in his journey to *Paris*, he gave a plenary absolution to all that had been actors in the massacre.

† *Sir J. Temple's* hist. of the *Irish* rebellion and massacre.

‡ *Bishop Burnet's* sermon for the exiles of the principality of *Orange*,

out that they should have three months to sell their effects, this was made ineffectual by secret intimations, that those who should buy them would be looked upon as favourers of heresy; and it was infused into the people by the clergy, that it was a mortal sin to furnish them with any encouragement to go where they would live and die in heresy.

The cruelties of *Thorn* are of later date. The Jesuits contrivance to have them acted under the colour of punishing riot, was one part of the wickedness.* The aim was at the churches and schools, which they have now got the possession of. The cardinal primate of *Poland* says, *the sacred execution at Thorn, against the profaners of holy things, ought never to be forgotten.*† He seems to look back upon the beheading, and choppings, and manglings, and dreadful whippings, with pleasure.--- So the wolf licks his jaws after a bloody meal.

The poor *Saltzburghers* are before our eyes.--- More of such *sacred* doings.--- Stript of all they had in the world, and driven from their habitations by a bigotted priest and prince, who as a bishop had sworn it, and as a Popish prince was obliged to it.--- They were first threatned with beheading, drowning, and sending to the galleys. Their leaders were seized, and thrown into deep dungeons, and loaded with fetters; whilst others were sent away in so secret a manner, that their nearest relations have not since been able to hear any thing of them. When these methods proved ineffectual, they were suddenly ordered to leave their country, in the depth of winter. This order was executed with the utmost rigor. Some were taken in the field, others dragg'd out of their beds, hardly

* *Mottraye*, V. 3.

† Primate's letter to the Palatinates of *Poland*. Political State, *Aug.* 1733.

ly being suffered to put on their cloaths, and the people in general obliged to depart without being permitted to sell any of their effects, or take any thing necessary along with them. Husbands were torn away from their wives, and sent a wandering like vagabonds, deprived of all they had in the world.* Their case appear'd so deplorable, that the emperor of *Germany*, tho' a Popish prince, graciously interposed in their favour, tho' to little purpose for the poor sufferers; and perhaps he may incur the suspicion of being a *favourer of hereticks* for it. However, it shows that in the sufferings of these poor people there was no pretence for a charge of any criminal practices of a civil nature, but that it was all purely for conscience. † *How long, Lord, holy and true!*

It is time I should come to the third head of charge.

§. 3. The *spirit* of Popery is a cruel spirit. Cruelty is the genius of that religion. The religion itself teaches it, breathes it, every where, and inspires it into its votaries. It is calculated to suppress the tenderest emotions of humanity. If it does not effectually do it in every breast, no thanks to the religion. *That* teaches the husband to betray the wife, the wife the husband, the daughter the mother,

* A serious call to the city of *London*, printed in 1732. which contains many passages printed from the account in high *Dutch*.

Daily Journal, Mund. Feb. 11. 1732.

Friday, Feb. 21, ditto.

† The first company of these fugitives were to the Number of eight hundred, who spent five whole weeks in their journey before they met with any considerable relief; a fortnight of which they spent in wandering over mountainous places, not knowing whither they went; and when they arrived at the district of *Rastadt*, they were almost famished, having been in want of bread for three days together. The number of those who have already left their country, with those whom they expect will speedily follow, amounts to upwards of fifteen thousand persons, all forsaking their houses, lands, and nearest relations, that they may obtain a better resurrection. *Id. ib.*

mother, and the mother the daughter.* What could ever produce such a maxim, that it is no more sin to kill an heretick than a dog,† but that spirit of cruelty that has interwoven itself with their religion? Is it because they are conscious to themselves, that such absurd doctrines, and such fantastick worship, are no other way to be supported but by these terrors? Or else, why such severe punishments for difference of opinion? Why must mens minds be *searched* into, to find out personal sentiments by oaths *ex officio*, by articles contrived on purpose with a *barbed hook* for the conscience? Why *confiscation* of estate, *banishment*, *prison*, *torture*, for being mistaken, if it be a mistake, but from cruelty? Are these things the meaning of that text, 2 *Tim.* ii. 25. *In meekness instructing those who oppose themselves?* Why *death*, which cuts off all opportunity of knowing better, or of repentance? Or if it must be death, why so bitter a death as *burning*, the most tormenting of all deaths? Or if burning, why not the most *speedy* way of it? Why must a poor creature be roasted alive at a distant fire?‡ Or if that must be, to comply with wicked canons of the church --- why so much *pleasure* and joy in the spectators, at the torture of a poor soul, who undergoes it all, rather than do what he thinks would displease God, when the same people shall relent with pity at the sight of the execution of a robber or a murderer?§ Why the addition of so cruel a *mockery*,

* *Clarkson's* practical divinity of Papists, *ubi supra*, p. 328.

† A saying frequently in the mouth of the *Irish* murderers. *Vid.* *Clarkson's* practical divinity of the Papists, p. 329.

‡ Dr. *Geddes's* account of the executions of the inquisition.

§ During Dr. *Geddes's* residence at *Lisbon* he was present at a jail-delivery of the prisoners of the inquisition, where he saw with horror and detestation men cruelly burnt, or rather roasted alive, because they would not abjure that which they in their conscience believed to be truth, one of them continued alive in the flames about two hours

kery, as praying the magistrate *for the love of God; and in regard to piety and mercy, and of their mediation, to free this miserable person from all danger of death, or mutilation of members?* When after all this grimace they know the magistrate must burn him.* What can be the true answer to all these questions, but --- CRUELTY? Or if all this might some way or other be excused, why must the spectators be forbid so much as to *pity* a poor sufferer for conscience? as they were in *Queen Mary's* days.† And in the persecution of *Bohemia*, it was punishable

hours after he gave over speaking, as he could perceive by the motion and lifting up of his hands. As long as they were able to speak, they incessantly cried out, *Mercy, mercy, for the love of God;* but no mercy was to be obtained from their merciless persecutors, who sport themselves with burning off their lips and noses with lighted torches before the fire is kindled, and behold their severest agonies in the midst of the flames with inexpressible delight: to such degrees of hellish cruelty can this antichristian religion excite men! The same people are otherwise good-natured enough, and cannot but look upon the sufferings of common malefactors with great pity and compassion; but in the case of those they call hereticks, they seem be devoid of all humanity, and are possessed with such an infernal fury as to assist at the executions of the *inquisition* with the utmost height of satisfaction in their countenances, exulting and triumphing as cannot be imagined by those who have not seen them. Dr. Geddes's tracts against Popery, or his remains. *The publisher to the reader*, p. 17.

Dr. Geddes, in his *View of the court of inquisition in Portugal, with a list of the prisoners that came forth in an act of the faith celebrated at Lisbon in the year 1682*, gives an account of some young women that were in that prison; and farther says, *Let these young-married women be kept never so long in the prison of the inquisition, their husbands, tho' never so fond of them, dare not for their lives express the least uneasiness at it; nor dare a parent for a child, nor a child for a parent.*

* Pontificale Rom. p. 456. 1611.

† Burner's Ref. hist. Vol. 3. introd. One letter of a more singular strain was wrote to the Lord-mayor and the Sheriffs of *London*, to give substantial orders, (I give the words of the council-book) that when any obstinate man, condemned by order of the law, shall be delivered to be punished for heresy, there be a good number of officers, and other men appointed to be at the execution, who
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punishable by whips and pillory to give a little refreshment to a godly sufferer, so much as a bit of bread.*

Why are people furbid so much as to *pray* for the martyr in flames? Thus when cardinal *Beton* in *Scotland*, a wicked persecuting priest, had got into his hands one of the most excellent men in the kingdom, the godly reformer *Mr. Wisbart*, he was burnt alive before his palace window at *St. Andrew's*. Upon the day of his execution, the cardinal caused it to be proclaimed thro' the city --- *that no one should pray for him under the severest ecclesiastical censures.* † Is that Spirit which commands us to *pray for them that persecute us*, the same with that which forbids praying for the persecuted? Why do they show an inclination to do all they can towards *damning* the soul, as well as burning the body? Thus when *John Huss* was condemned to be burnt by the council of *Constance*, in violation of the emperor's faith given him for his safe return, seven bishops degraded him: and then a paper mitre was put upon his head in form of a pyramid, and the height of a cubit, on which they had painted three devils of an horrible shape, with this inscription, *Heresiarcha*. And in this condition the prelates delivered his body to be burnt, adding these words, and *we devote thy soul to the devils in hell.* ‡ Whereas, when our judges pronounce sentence upon the worst malefactors, they don't make sport with their miseries, nor give them to the devil, but pray, --- *the Lord have mer-*

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may be charged to see such as shall *misuse themselves*, by COMFORTING, AIDING, OR PRAISING the offender, to be apprehended.

* *Jurieu*, Prejugez contre Papisme, partie seconde, ch. 26, 27.

† *Keith's* account of *Scotch* affairs, as to the cardinal's forbidding to pray for him.

‡ *L'Enfant's* hist. of the council of *Constance*, Vol. 1. p. 426, *Animam tuam devovimus diabolis infernis.*

cy upon thy soul. ---- What answer can be given to these questions? Or what account of these practices, but ---- Cruelty? St. *John* in the *Revelation* has finely represented this cruelty of spirit of their church by the image of a woman drunk with blood, chap. xvii. 6. *And I saw the woman, the great whore that sitteth upon many waters*, ver. 1. (*i. e.*) that rules and domineers over much people, has a jurisdiction which spreads far and wide, and from thence pretends to be the catholick church. *I saw the woman, drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus*; and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration, (*i. e.*) Wonderful cruelty! To be drunk, supposes the draughts to have been frequent, large, and pleasant: nobody chuses to be drunk with what is unpleasant to the palate. So that to be drunk with blood, supposes the draughts of blood to be frequent, large, and pleasant. And what a palate must that be to which blood is pleasant, but cruelty itself? And as people when they are drunk talk nonsense, and do extravagant things; so this woman, having by cruelty and blood intoxicated herself with the grandeur thereby attained, she says, and insists upon it, that number one is number a thousand, the same number one; that an inch is as long as five or six foot; that she never did, nor can, tell a lye in her life, nor do any thing amiss; and she raves at every one that don't believe all this, and vows to be the death of them when she gets them in her power. To proceed:

§. 4. As it does not appear that Popery is *mended* in these respects, so it is not easy to conceive how it ever should.

Can these principles be disowned, which are the dictates of the Holy Ghost? Those decrees and canons that were framed by infallible councils, without giving up the doctrine of their infallibility?

lity? Is there any room for amendment without owning a mistake?

Popery is still animated by the same spirit of cruelty and fraud as ever; and notwithstanding the politeness that reigns in the manners of the age, these principles would be received, and urged upon the consciences of their votaries; and would be practised upon the merciful even of that communion themselves, if they should decline to come into their cruel measures. Good-nature, relation, friendship, promises, must all give way to the utility of the church, *and doing God service.**

The treatment of our Protestant brethren abroad, the cruelties of the inquisition, do in the most unanswerable manner assure us, that Popery is the same bloody and deceitful thing as ever it was. Let some Papists be as well bred, and good-natured, and complaisant as you please; and accompany their winning behaviour with many a donative among the poor, which at once procures the applause of the multitude, and paves the way for now and then a proselyte --- I say --- whatever good qualities particular Papists may shew, their brethren abroad, as often as they are able, prove to us, that Popery itself is still the same bloody and deceitful thing that ever it was; and some of their brethren at home too have so little command of themselves, as to insult Protestants in their own country, and under the protection of our laws, and in the very defiance to that connivance which they enjoy the benefit of.

Thus have I gone thro' what I proposed, *viz.* to make good the charge of persecuting *principles, practices* and *spirit*, on the church of *Rome*. I aim not at raising an indignation against persons, but against principles. I would be as tender of the persons of those who are unhappily deceived into

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* Decret. lib. 2. tit. 27. c. 27. *Quia non.*

such notions, as Christianity obliges me, and self-defence will allow. I pray for their conversion, relieve the needy of them, and pity the distressed, and am deeply concerned for the great hazard of their salvation in Popery, which is so adapted to spoil Christianity, as poison mixed with a cordial of the highest name. For I cannot but be of the mind, that Popery as such is not Christianity. No, Antichrist is not Christ; idolatry and superstition is not gospel worship; the mass is not the Lord's supper; persecution with fire and sword is not among the means of grace; killing men is not *-serving of God*; prayers in an unknown tongue are not a reasonable service; cruelty is not gospel charity; without which, tho' *I had all knowledge, and did all miracles, yet I were nothing*. Nothing is not every thing, or the only thing. They say they have the essentials of Christianity. I answer, so have we, and need not go to them for any thing, nor borrow any thing from them. So has a man that has the plague, all the essentials of a man, but then he has the plague besides, and we avoid him. So the *voice from Heaven* says, *Come out from among them my people*, Rev. xviii. 4. for though a man may recover and live that has the plague, the infection is mortal in its nature.

To close now with a few remarks.

1. See what we were *delivered from* at the glorious revolution, and renew your thankfulness to God for it. Our religion in their stile, you know, is the pestilent *Northern* heresy; and their religion, we have seen, obliges them to extirpate the same to the utmost of their power. That therefore a prince, so well instructed in this religion, and so zealous for it, as *James the II^d* was, should think himself obliged to use the power God had given for that purpose, was no more than shewing himself a good Catholick; and so much the better

better Catholick, by how much the worse prince to a Protestant nation.---- The steps taken were very natural; but we remember with pleasure they were so hasty, as to render the design abortive. Their hastiness for our ruin, proved our salvation; as it even forced some to open their eyes, who were willing enough to sleep on, because it was in a whole skin. But when they saw the *English* monarchy turned into an arbitrary tyranny, and a dispensing power; charters taken away, and all back'd with an army of 40,000 men; not by consent of parliament, which makes our forces the people's army, the nation's guard; but without parliament, and against parliament; officer'd with *French* and *Irish* Papists; to make room for whom, the Protestant officers were by various pretences turned out: they became sensible of the reasonableness of self-defence against *lawless power*; and in order to get rid of this *exotic* government and religion together, the nation, after many cries to heaven, cast their eyes over to the prince and princess of *Orange* ---- and just as the knife was at our throat ---- away the hero came, with the PROTESTANT RELIGION AND THE LIBERTIES OF ENGLAND, in his standard, in his heart, and in his righteous cause.---- His memory will be glorious as long as there is any sense of liberty, regard to religion, or love of our country remaining; as long as we, or our posterity, enjoy the happiness of our Protestant succession, which was one of the blessings wrapt up in that great deliverance.

2. See what you must *expect* upon the return of Popery in power.---- What can be expected from these *principles* and this *spirit*? Read the book of *Martyrs*; the history of the *French* and *Bohemian* persecutions, and expect the dregs of that bitter cup that has gone round to so many

churches in *Europe*. Read the history of the *inquisition*, and expect all that may be expected from the spirit of revenge: Revenge for injury received, added to the instigation of a religion, not only cruel in its nature, but making a *merit* of being so.----

The apprehension is dreadful! and the supposition is a reproach to the common sense of our nation. But the annals of *England* shew us, that our valour has been often more conspicuous than our understandings, and that the follies of one age have made hazardous work for the courage of another. So that dangers and deliverances, foolish divisions, leading into straits, and bold strokes of courage in getting out of them, have made up the chequer-work of our history. I wish it may appear, that either our dangers or deliverances have made this age wiser.---- If we are so ---- then I add in the third place,

3. We shall do all we can, consistently with our own principles, to *prevent the growth* of Popery in these kingdoms, and the return of that bloody religion.

They want numbers; the increasing their numbers is what they are intent upon, and must be owned to be to their purpose. Scripture knows them not. Antiquity is ignorant of them. It's foolish in them to think of doing much by argument. Writing is only an amusement, while they are busy another way. To prevent their growing in numbers is what every one should assist in, who has any estate to lose; any conscience to be distressed; any posterity to be tender of; any love to his Protestant King and country.---- What can be done? ---- We must not persecute to prevent persecution ---- But it is answered ---- Self-defence is no persecution. It is replied ----
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The methods of our self-defence must be agreeable to the liberty of our constitution, and the rules of our blessed religion. ---- They know this, they make their advantage of it toward the ruin of that very constitution they enjoy the benefit of, and under the gentle spirit of that blessed religion they seek to destroy. ---- For which reason, it is with an ill grace that they plead the benefit of either of them in their favour, who are continually labouring to destroy both.

Those who avow the extirpation of all who differ from them, like *Ishmael*, *their hand is against every man, if every man's hand should be against them*, have they reason to complain? Men who are sworn to a foreign jurisdiction, as their priests are; men whose principles and practices will not permit us to imagine, they can give a legal security to the government, either as it is Protestant, or as it is settled upon the revolution foot: men who if they do swear to the government, are furnished with so many evasions, equivocations, mental reservations, dispensations before-hand, or absolutions afterward; that there is hardly any hold of them; nor any dependance on their renouncing the exterminating doctrines. ---- As soon as our connivance had increased their numbers sufficiently, could we expect they would tolerate those who now tolerate them, any more than in ages past? *Liberty of conscience*, (as one says,) *is ridiculous in the mouth of a Papist, and not only ridiculous but perfidious, and insincere, qualities inseparable from their nature, for so many ages past. Since it is certain, they would not forbear three years, bringing those to the stake, who would not go to Mass, had they once more the power in their own hands.** And yet I say it again, we must not persecute;
M m 3 but

* Bayle's comment. Vol. 1. p. 6.

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but whatever can be done, without that, ought to be done, for self-defence, to prevent their increase, to restrain their power, and to cut off opportunity of their doing us mischief. ---- We leave that to the wisdom of the nation.

In the last place:

4. The *guilt* of so much blood and cruelty, is an heavy *load* upon that church, that will surely bring her down, and sink her as a millstone into the sea; when God maketh inquisition for blood, *in her will be found the blood of the saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth*, Rev. xviii. 24. It will be found belonging to her account, some way or other; as owing to her *principles*, or shed by her *instigation* or with her *approbation*. *The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground*, said God to the first persecutor; the voice of all this blood of our brethren has been crying from the ground a long time; in conjunction with the cry of the *souls* under the altar. ---- *How long, oh Lord, holy and true, e're thou avenge our blood?* together with the cry of the *prayers* of his people, who frequently say ---- *Let Babylon come in remembrance before thee.* ---- These cries are heard ---- and will be answered. ---- *He will judge the great whore, that has corrupted the earth, and will avenge the blood of his servants at her hands*, Rev. xix. The kings of the earth, who have hitherto been terrified into a foolish subjection to the insolence and craft of men they ought to have controuled; men they have a rightful dominion over; these kings of the earth will come to their senses; and shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire, for God hath put it into their hearts to fulfil his will. And when that blessed day shall come, where-

wherein the angel with a mighty voice shall proclaim, *Babylon the great, is fallen, is fallen*; ---- there breaks out an universal Allelujah, that shall fill heaven and earth with its harmony. ---- Every harp and every tongue employed, and every soul in rapture with melodious joy. May you and I be there, and bear our part.

The Reasons and Necessity of the Reformation.

A

S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D A T

Salters-Hall, April 17, 1735.

By *T H O M A S L E A V E S L Y.*

H E B R E W S x i. 8.

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out, into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

TH E restless attempts of the Roman power by its emissaries every where, to bring Protestants again into bondage, have inspir'd the concern for your establishment in truth and liberty, which has been expressed in a course of sermons in this place. Popery has been truly

truly represented to you; and the artful disguises of it, to hide its frightful deformity, have been taken off; that you might see it naked and uncolour'd. In 1685, Dr. *Wake*, * the now primate of the church of *England*, observ'd; It is a long time since it has been resolv'd by many of their Casuists, that it is lawful to disguise the sentiments of their religion, not only in private conferences, but in the very pulpit itself, when there is a sufficient Reason for the doing of it. But, says he, I cannot tell whether it be so generally known, that it is lawful for them to set their hands, and to approve those books whose principles and doctrine they dislike, by an art peculiar to themselves, and which Protestants who are used to sincere dealing will find it a little difficult to believe. You have been again and again warn'd of this; and their claims and principles have been set before you truly, that you might form a judgment of them for your own conduct, and your converse with any that are deceiv'd, or would pervert you.

If there be any true logick or reasoning in the world, we must conclude, that a reformation, from such a disorder'd state of religion, is necessary for all those who would please and honour God, and adhere to Jesus Christ, and save their own souls.

This is what is now incumbent on me, to make and maintain this inference, and impress it on your mind; and I am perswaded that any but those that have eyes, and yet will not see, any that will but open their eyes must see that,

It was the most reasonable and necessary thing to attempt and carry on that reformation, which all the Christian world, except the usurpers themselves, requir'd, and cry'd out for; and even those usurpers were constrain'd to make some professions of

* Preface to the exposition of the doctrine of the church of *England*, &c.

of that necessity, and some feign'd shews of intending to do that work themselves, that others more hearty and sincere might drop it, and leave it to their more artful management. *

It must be confess'd that these corrupters of religion had, with exquisite craft, set the true articles of the Christian faith in the front of their impostures; they have own'd the divine inspiration of the sacred scripture; the articles of the apostles creed, and more, the *Nicene*, *Athanasian* creeds, established by the councils. And what, would you reform from these? Are not these enough to edify your souls, and secure your salvation? But pray let us see what is that long roll that is join'd with them, that must be taken and eaten together, that we must swallow down and concoct as well as we can, though our conscience and all within us turn against it. Alas we find, that the *Trent* religion, *Pius's* creed, has given us twelve articles of Christian faith, only as the old *Romans* led their captives in triumph, while the following articles of Popery are to bear all the glory upon the necessity of our salvation; and believing in Christ will not avail us unless we swear obedience to the Pope.

Now what is this but to set *Solomon's* porch to the house of *Baal*, or the temple of *Dagon*? This is no less impiety than that of the priest, that poison'd the emperor with a consecrated host. What greater dishonour can be done to the word of God, than just to make it a preface to the traditions of men, whereby all the commandments of
God

* *Anno 1523.* *Adrian* gave commission to his nuntio in *Germany* to confess, that the confusion was caused by the sins of men, especially of the priests and prelates, confessing that some years since some abominations have been committed in that holy see; many abuses in spiritual things, many transgressions of the commandments, and lastly, all things turn'd to the worst; so that it may be said, the infirmity has pass'd from the head to the members, from the Popes to the inferior prelates, insomuch that there hath been none that doth good, no not one.

God are made void? These shams of the *Samaritans* are only to delay and hinder the building of the house of God; *Let us, say they, build with you, for we seek your God as you do, and we do sacrifice to him:* * yet were they adversaries of *Judah* and *Benjamin*. *Zerubbabel* and *Jeshua* the chief of the fathers of *Israel* declare to them, *You have nothing to do with us to build an house to our God, but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel. Then their enemies weakned their hands, and troubled them in building; and bired counsellors to frustrate their purposes, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia.*

Thus it hath been a stale artifice of evil men and seducers, to mix truth with errors, to make poison palatable, that it may be taken without suspicion, and work without fail; and so by catholick creeds, and the names of catholick church, and general councils and the like, many that have had a detestation for the encroachments of Popes, and their court and consistories, are yet kept religiously in the communion of the *Roman* church, as they esteem it; but for you fellow Protestants, we say, as the apostle *John*, 1 *John* ii. 11. *We have not preached, and written to you, because you know not the truth, but because you know it, and that no lye is of the truth.*

Our adversaries with a sovereign impudence would face us down, that notwithstanding all we have and can say of the incroachments and usurpations, tyranny and corruptions of the *Roman* church, we can have no right to separate from her and reform ourselves, and enter into a communion with those that think themselves called of God so to do, but that we must be damnable hereticks and schismaticks for attempting and persisting in it. And that altho' the *Roman* church were indeed become heretical and idolatrous, and whatever we charge upon her doctrine and worship, still we must be under the guilt of schism, and suffer the consequences of it.

That

* *Ezra* iv. 2, 3.

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That it is not lawful to make any change of religion * without the Pope and a council †. And so they admit that monstrous canon,---- If we see the Pope neglecting his own salvation and that of his brethren, unprofitable, regardless of his work, silent of all good; that he hurts his own salvation, drawing with him innumerable people to the utmost misery, to be punished with him eternally with many stripes---- Yet no man ought to reprove him or chastise his faults, because he is to judge all the world, unless one knows that he err in the faith. ‡ ----So the general of the *des Lainez*, in his suffrage: None can reform the *Roman* church, for the servant is not above his Lord. You will surely see we have a contrary pattern before us in the text, and that the good reformers of the sixteenth century, and all that follow them, as the apostle *Paul* speaks to the *Romans*, *walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham* **. When the God of glory appear'd to him and convinced him of the ungodliness of idolatry, and made himself known to him, and called him to go out from that idolatrous communion, he had been brought up in; he obeyed at all adventures, and goes out in the strength of faith, and commits himself to the conduct of providence, in firm dependance on God's promise, and resignation to his will.

You will easily see the sense and spirit of my text shine in what I shall offer to you, and strongly proving the necessity, and shewing the reasons of that reformation that we adhere to and maintain. *Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead* ††.

I shall

* Boniface, Bishop of Mayence.

† Decret. Grat. Dist. 40.

** Rom. iv. 12.

‡ F. Paul, 721.

†† Rom. iv. 23, 24.

I shall endeavour to discharge what is assigned me,

I. In considering distinctly the reformation that we speak of, and shew you what we refer to and mean by it.

II. The reasons and necessity of it; and conclude.

As to the first, the reformation :

We don't pretend to set up the happy and glorious instruments of it as a new ecclesiastical judicature, and to account for all the incidents, and every step of that wonderful work.

We don't erect a protestant supremacy and infallibility upon the ruins of the papal, nor undertake to maintain all the doctrines of *Luther* and *Zuinglius*, or *Calvin*, or the churches of *France*, or *England*, or *Scotland*. This would be to build up again what we have destroy'd, and to ruin that liberty of examining and proving all things, that we may hold fast that which is good.

The word REFORMATION looks back to an original rectitude established by God in the very nature of things, and declar'd and settled by the only supreme authority of God himself, by those whom we are sure he empowered and qualify'd; and where these are contradicted, we may reject all pretenders to a divine authority; *To the law and to the testimony.*

God has given man his understanding to this purpose, which has an original liberty and power to observe things, and enquire and judge with due care and circumspection, to discern between right and wrong, good and evil, that we might try things which differ, and *approve things that are excellent* *. And whoever would engage our submission, must do it by *commending themselves to our conscience in the sight of God, by the manifestation of the truth* †.

We

* Phil. i. 9, 10.

† 2 Cor. iv. 2.

We have a sure rule in the gospel of Christ, established by an anathema infinitely dreadful: *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you, than that we have preached, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any preach another gospel unto you, than that you have received, let him be accursed.* † 'Tis no new thing in the world for men to break through the divine and sacred settlements of religion, and to pervert the gospel of Christ. There ever were false prophets and false apostles: Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light: those who sat in the chair of *Moses* had leavened the *Jewish* religion, and were to be heard with great caution, notwithstanding the authority they had received; and when they became enemies to the great reformation that Christ had undertaken, they were to be no farther regarded.

REFORMATION itself has two essential and comprehensive parts:

1. Detecting and disclaiming, renouncing and forsaking all false authority, and every corruption of the sure institutions of religion, which we have received from God. The apostle styles gospel times, *the time of reformation*, *διορθωσις*: * importing the end and occasion of Christ's appearing in the world, when things were lapsed into utter disorder, whereby God was dishonoured and displeased; sad confusion and lamentable darkness, and mistaken notions of God and religion, spread and prevailing in the world, to the dishonour of God, and corrupting the minds and manners of men, and making their lives flagitious, and so destroying the hopes of that great salvation God had formed men for, and which he intended in all the institutions of religion. Whatever, therefore, opposes this great design of Christ's coming, is to be resisted; we must depart from it, and protest against it.

2. The

† Gal. i. 8, 9.

* Heb. ix. 10.

2. The second part of reformation is an actual return to that simplicity of subjection and obedience, that we owe only to the great author and finisher of our faith. He came to reform the world, and lead men back to the right ways of God, which he hath impressed on the conscience, and published by his prophets, and messengers, and ambassadors to the world. *We were like sheep going astray, but now are returned unto the shepherd and bishop of our souls.* † Thieves and robbers had climbed into the sheephold, to fleece and devour the sheep, * when their voice, their very speech, their doctrines bewray'd them; we must not follow, but flee from them. But when we hear the voice of Christ, and he calleth us, and leads us out, and goes before us, we follow him, *for we know his voice*, and are, as we ought to be, assured it is he and not another that calls, and leads us.

II. The second thing we ought to open to you is, the reason and necessity of that reformation, which was begun in so remarkable and wonderful a manner, in the beginning of the 16th century.--- The occasions and calls for it were many, and extremely pressing; the liberty of mens understanding and conscience violated in the most insolent and outrageous manner; their dictates suppressed and stifled; the true and original settlements of religion by God and Christ vacated and defeated, and dominion over the faith and consciences of men cruelly exercis'd: and the original charters of the children of God were conceal'd, with evident erasements and false glosses. The *Roman* pontiff set up an empire of darkness, and, as a strong man armed, kept the house as his own property. Instead of the subjection and allegiance we owe to God and Christ, and that humble and sincere obedience that we are to yield to the gospel, the papal claims en-

gross

† 1 Pet. ii. 25.

* John. x.

gross and top over all: and those that profess'd themselves the creatures of the Pope, so far slighted the gospel of our salvation, that as we are told by *Zuinglius*, * *John Faber* the vicar of *Constance* said, We might have liv'd in peace, if there had been no gospel: And cardinal *Hofius*, That the church would stand on a firmer foot, *Meliori Talo*, if the gospel had never been written. But instead of this, the bishop of *Bitonto*, at the opening of the council of *Trent*, with a flaunting oratory, calls upon the woods of *Trent* to eccho it through the world, that all should submit themselves to that council, which if they do not, it will be justly said, The Pope's light is come into the world, and men have loved darkness better than light.† This indeed appeared like blasphemy to some that attended, and it was wish'd, that, at least, he had not taken the formal words of holy scripture, that he might not have shewed so openly to disesteem it. Those who had any knowledge of the court of *Rome*, could not but see the sad occasion there was for reformation: We have an account from one bred up in the *Roman* bigotry, and even after his account of *Rome* continuing a catholick; by what steps he came to know the papal imposture.‡ Going to *Rome*, he quickly saw there was nothing in what he had been taught to think of the Pope and Cardinals.-----He had thought that the Pope had every day news from paradise, That he sent whom he would to heaven or hell, That he was holy, infallible, impeccable in all that he said or did; as he ought to be, if Christ had given him such an employ as he pretends.---He had a most extended knowledge of all things, a continual application to the salvation of all men: and so in proportion of the Cardinals, he revered them exceedingly at a distance.

But

* Op. T. 2. p. 612.

† F. Paul, 132—3.

‡ Moyens sur pres.

But such was his disappointment, that it almost distracted him. Nothing appeared *in that holy city, in that mother* and mistress of all churches, but horrible dissolution of manners, in court and city, without the least signs of the fear of God; but abominations of every kind.----- This made him think, how is the world abused? Oh that they could see this to open their eyes! Is this his holiness that gives pardons, and indulgences, and canonizes saints? are these the people that must give out laws and rules of religion to the whole world? This made him ready to renounce Christianity; till the opportunity of reading a *Latin* testament relieved him, and gave him consolation; but made it utterly impossible to believe, that the Pope was the universal vicar of Christ; but made appear that Christ was the head of his church, the church his body, the faithful his members.----Not one word of Pope or Cardinals, or any that belonged to them; but examples and exhortations to humility, godliness, chastity, charity, renouncing the world and its pomps, its grandures, its vanities, its riches and pleasures, by master and disciples. But all things directly contrary in the Popes and the whole court.

Nothing can be more manifest than that the papal pretensions of sovereignty must destroy the liberty of our understanding, and divert men from enquiring after the mind and will of God, and studying the mind of Christ: for I think I may say, in truth, that half so much has not been said of our obedience to Christ, as has been said for his pretended vicar, and the usurped power of what they call the church. I shall set before you claims of the pontiff of *Rome*, as they are drawn up by the excellent Dr. *Barrow*, who has thoroughly examin'd and effectually demolished them, *viz.* * That to the Pope, a sovereign monarch by sanction of the whole church, do appertain royal prerogatives,

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called

* Qto. p. 31.

called *Regalia Petri*, in the oath prescribed to the bishops; such as these which follow,

To be superior to the whole church, and to its representative in a general synod of bishops. To convocate general synods at his pleasure, all bishops being obliged to attend on his summons. To preside in synods, so as to suggest matter, promote, obstruct, over-rule all the debates in them. To confirm or invalidate their determinations, giving life to them by his assent; or subtracting it by his Dissent. To define points of doctrine, or to decide controversies authoritatively. To enact, suspend, dispense with ecclesiastical laws and canons. To relax or evacuate ecclesiastical censures, by indulgence and pardon. To void promises, oaths, obligations to laws, by his dispensations. To be the fountain of all pastoral jurisdiction and dignity. *And after many others.*

To be himself unaccountable for any of his doings, exempt from judgment, and liable to no reproof.-----To summon and commissionate soldiers, by croisade, to fight against and destroy infidels, &c. Now, brethren, is it fit for any men in their senses to own such claims as these? Can there be any safety or liberty, truth or justice, where these powers are granted to any mortal? Did the keys of the kingdom of heaven, given to *St. Peter*, intend any thing so boundless and absolute in itself, and so oppressive and enslaving to the world? Who then would be a Christian? Is the yoke easy, &c. These powers have sometimes met with some check and contradiction, but of no effect and continuance; and whatever was resum'd by some councils, as that of *Constance* and *Basil*, was lost again, and in a silent, but effectual, way resum'd by the council of *Trent*, by the clause, *Proponentibus Legatis*, and by the referring all things to the Pope's confirmation, and salvo to his authority. So that the
council

council of *Trent*, so earnestly desired by emperors and kings, to settle the disorder'd state of religion, was conducted by the court of *Rome* to defeat all attempts for reformation.* It remain'd therefore, that all that were convinced of the very corrupt state of religion in the *Roman* communion should carry on their protestations, and reform themselves in the best manner they could, to advance the honour and obtain the favour of God, and their own peace and edification. Therefore our learned and pious bishop *Jewel* writes to his friend in *Italy*, Signior *Scipio* ; When you see that all things are most unjustly handled, that nothing is sincerely and fairly carried in the council, you may not wonder that our men had rather tarry at home, than take so long and idle a journey, in which they shall both lose their labour and betray their cause.

You will say, It is not lawful to make a change in religion without order from the Pope and the general council. Yet the Popes have changed almost the whole state of the primitive church, without any council at all.

For, what? While the Pope assembleth the council, and the bishops and abbots return home, will they have God's people in the meantime to be deceiv'd, to err, to mistake themselves, to be overwhelm'd with errors, and want the knowledge of God, and to be carried to everlasting destruction?

Is it not lawful for any of us to believe in Christ, to profess the gospel, to serve God aright, to fly superstition and idolatry, except they will give us leave?

* *E. Paul*, p. 436. *Vergarini*.

The state of God's children were most miserable, if, there being so many errors and so generally spread, and so gross, so blind, so foul, so perspicuous, and manifest, that even our adversaries themselves are not able to deny them, nothing could be done without the whole world could meet in a general council.

Thus he reasonably expostulates, and makes it evident, that corruptions in religion must not be suffer'd to go on without observation and detection, without opposition and reformation: That we may reform ourselves in *England*, and that every country, city, or church may do so, without getting a licence from the Pope and a council. Must the word and commands of God, which we are sure are his, and the gospel of Christ stay for letters of commendation from them?

Must we ask leave of any mortal man to open our eyes, to use our understanding, to seek God and worship him, as our conscience directs and he commands? Must we, who were baptized into the observance of all that Christ commanded, neglect to read his gospel, and instead of the commandments of Christ observe the arbitrary commands of a man, that will call himself the head and the master of the church. These demands are impious and shocking to those that read the testament, and believe the sufficiency and faithfulness of the apostles of Christ in delivering to us all things they had received of him, and declaring to us the whole counsel of God.

The means of acquiring the methods of using their beloved prerogatives, and the mischiefs they have caused in the world, gave the loudest call to thinking and sober men to disown and condemn them. From the beginning it was not so; nor is it pretended to be the original state of Christianity. Wicked and worldly men, getting into office in the church, pursued the gratification of their
lust

lust of power, and pomp and riches, abused the respect that was shown to them for the sake of Christ and his gospel by people of simplicity, and by emperors that were converted to the Christian faith. All the changes in the empire were watched for opportunities to aggrandize their power; till at last *Boniface III.* by wicked compliances with a murderer and usurper, *Phocas*, got the title of *head of the church* and *universal bishop*; and then their power increased prodigiously, and his successors always took the advantage of the weakness of the *Greek* emperors and the disorders in *Italy*, to encrease their authority by policy and violence; and to declare war against emperors, to whom before they had been subject.* So that the emperor *Babarossa* in 1150. writes to the princes of *Germany*, That the Popes being enriched by the emperor, now undertake to dethrone kings, and princes, and will have none equal with themselves: That they aspire to divinity itself, and that they would be no less feared and adored than God himself, nay even more; and that the Christian religion hath no greater enemies than they.

Their authority has been used to raise the most bloody wars, and by the cursed projects of *Croisado's* to engage Christian princes and people to weaken themselves and harra's and destroy one another, that they might be a prey to the Popes, and incapable of defending their own privileges and the immunities of their country. Their bloody cruelties executed by these have been justly presented, to your horror and amazement; and yet half has not been told you.

Another use of their usurped authority will lead me directly to the necessity of the reformation; that was, the most scandalous means of raising money by indulgences; which, as you have heard, was the chief design of the invention of purgato-

* Richard. hist. concil. gener. *Aventin*, hist. Bo.

ry; before which no body troubled their heads about indulgences, as *Fisher* bishop of *Rocheſter* declares in his book againſt *Luther*, Artic. 13.

This was the awakening impoſition that made all men feel the cruel bondage; this detected the greedineſs of filthy lucre, that utterly deſtroyed the moſt canonical pretences of the biſhop of *Rome*.

Pope *Leo X.* who, as *Father Paul* ſets him forth, had a noble birth and education, good parts, ſingular learning, in humanity, goodneſs, and a ſweet manner in treating affairs, ---- a great inclination to favour thoſe that were learned; ---- would have been a Pope abſolutely complete, if with theſe he had join'd ſome knowledge in things that concern religion, and ſome more propenſion to piety; of both which he ſeemed careleſs.

When money muſt be had, by the advice of *Lorenzo Pucci*, one of his Cardinals, he ſends out a plenary indulgence ---- as *Urban II.* had done, to ſet on foot the holy war ---- and after, the ſame indulgences were given for taking arms againſt them, that would not obey the church; and infinite exactions were made under thoſe pretences. ---- Now all that would give money might have full pardons, even for thoſe that were dead, that they ſhould be freed from purgatory. *Thuanus* ſays, that he ſent his bulls throughout Chriſtendom to raiſe money for his immenſe expences, promiſing the expiation of all ſins, and eternal life, at a ſet price and rate, according to the nature of the crimes; and he appointed a treasury, and queſtors, and preachers to ſet forth the value and efficacy of theſe indulgences.

Then roſe *Luther*, a Monk, who refuted and expoſed the diſcourſes of the preachers, queſtions the Pope's power to give indulgences, and proceeds to examine the doctrines of Popery, and finds them corrupted and deprav'd, and publiſhes
 ninety-

ninety-five theses: and thus the dawn of the reformation appear'd, after a long and dark night, and nothing was able to stop the progress of it. Many others arise with an unfeigned zeal for truth, and are by no means either to be bribed or deterred, till they had laid open the reigning corruption and abuses, and brought back Christians to the pure word of God, and the holy institutions of Jesus Christ. In all this the hand of God appeared, and the true spring of the necessity was from him; he spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast. He said, let there be light, and there was light. 'Twas the call of God to come out from the communion, whose errors and impieties have been prov'd to you. The necessity I am considering, to which all the foregoing discourse refers, operated mightily upon the chosen vessels of the reformation, whose language was as the apostles, *We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard* *. The word of God was in their heart as a burning fire shut up in their bones, as *Jeremiah* speaks, *I was weary with forbearing, I could not stay*. There was a necessity impress'd on their mind; and this will not be difficult to make evident, nor appear ridiculous to sober minds, when a *Cicero* could say,---*Nemo sine afflatu divino verè magnus*. There was a magnanimity in the first reformers, that must always perpetuate their memories to the glory of God; and we should hope and pray, that the residue of that spirit may revive that work, and make a reformation flourish again.

I must own that when we speak of necessity in common discourse, we mean many times the connection of certain things or actions, with ends proposed and intended, either to escape evil or attain good; we also by it express natural and strong inclinations prevailing against some weaker bias and propension; or we mean somewhat that is fit and

* Acts iv. 20.

proper to the apprehension and judgment of our minds----All these constitute a compleat necessity. So that we do not mean a thing that could not possibly not be, or be otherwise than it is; 'tis so different in our case, that it is a wonder and surprise, that such an event should appear in the world: that when the world lieth in wickedness, and all men shun danger, shift off labour, and love their ease, that any should concern themselves in such an affair. *When a strong man arm'd keeps his palace, his goods are in peace* ;* and who would care to attack and provoke him? What is every one's concern is no body's business. A necessity in the case is most evident. Could men undertake such a work without pressing motives? The difficulties and dangers, the adversaries and enemies make it sure, that whatever was the spring, the necessity was inevitable. We estimate the strength of any spring by the weight it moves, and every weight by its counterpoise. Look therefore how few, how mean, how despised, the first actors in this cause were. *Mattheo Langi*, as *Father Paul* tells us, p. 55. It is not to be omitted, says he, that Cardinal *Mattheo Langi*, archbishop of *Saltzburg*, told every one, that the reformation of the mass was honest, the liberty of meats convenient, and the demand just to be disburthened of so many commandments of men: but that a poor *Monk* should reform all, was not to be *endur'd*. When the long arms of the Pope, the emperor's jealousy of his power, the prejudices of an old religion, stood in their way, what could keep up their courage or engage them to move a step? how could *Luther* venture into *Wormes*, where he had so many enemies? They knew that bonds and afflictions attended them. They knew what were the threatnings of their enemies; *The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together*

* Luke xi. 22.

gether against them *. How many mercenary pens and vile tongues employ'd to calumniate them? how many wheedling and cajoling offers, the mitres and the purple to allure them? One exhorts the Pope to convince them with chains and fire; all princes applied to withdraw their protection. The Cardinal *Volterra*, who had discouraged *Adrian VI.* from his attempts for reformation as an endless work, tells him, heresies were not to be extinguished by reformation, but *Crusadoes*; by exciting princes and people to root them out; that *Innocent III.* did happily thus oppress the *Albigenses* of *Languedoc*, and other Popes the *Waldenses*, *Picards*, and poor men of *Lions*: that there would not be wanting in *Germany* many princes, who in case the Pope would give them leave to seize themselves of the states of *Luther's* favourers, would greedily embrace the condition: and that he might cause many people to follow them, by granting indulgences and pardons, to whosoever would assist them. You see what threatned them. They went on with the work, tho' Pope *Adrian VI.* had the conscience and humanity to complain, that the condition of Popes was miserable, seeing it was plain, that they could do no good, tho' they desired and endeavoured to do it; and that it was not possible to effect any one point of reformation. These accounts taken out of the diary of the bishop of *Fabiano*, by Father *Paul*, p. 24.

The necessities and persecutions, the wars, the assaults and plundering they were exposed to, the routs and ruins that they sustain'd, demonstrated a mighty necessity that carry'd them on in their work: that, as the apostle speaks, *a necessity is laid on me*. They knew the fate of those that had suffer'd in the same cause; the cruel death of *John Huss* and *Jerom* of *Prague*, the bloody wars of *Bohemia*, the sufferings that attended even their glo-

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* Acts iv. 26.

rious successes under *Zisca*, and the misery at last brought on them by the perfidiousness of some among themselves. These things could not be unthought of, but they were counterbalanc'd, as in our text, *by faith, and a divine call*. It could by no means satisfy their conscience to be told, that * *Luther* ought not to be excus'd by the scandals and grievances of the church of *Rome*;----for in case they were true, yet ought they not to forsake the Catholick unity, but rather support what was amiss with all patience. It was a brave answer of *Luther* to an emperor, demanding his revocation, That he could not revoke any thing he had written or taught, if he were not convinced by the scriptures, or evident reason. He would indeed submit to a future council, if sentence were to be given on the articles drawn out of his book, according to the scriptures. And when he was ask'd, What remedy ought to be us'd to compose the troubles? He answered, Those only proposed by *Gamaliel* to the *Jews*, That if the enterprize were of man it would vanish, but if it came from God it was impossible to hinder it. And that might give satisfaction to the Pope; because all men ought to rest secure, as he, *Luther*, did, that if his design came not from God, it would perish in a short time. You see here, that a necessity was prevailing against all the the common fears and hopes of men.----The zeal of God's house, as *Luther* declared, had animated and supported him; and when he own'd his books, he boldly declares, It was too manifest that all the countries of Christendom were oppress'd, and groaned under the bondage; and that to retract, would be to confirm the tyranny. He turned himself to the emperor and princes, saying, It was a blessing of God when the true doctrine came to be made manifest, and to reject it was to draw on us extreme calamities.

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The elector *Palatine* was then obliged to interpose; or he had been then deliver'd up, had not that prince protested, That he would never draw on *Germany* the infamy of not keeping the publick faith to serve priests.

We have own'd the hand of God, we have prov'd the strong sensations of their own hearts in the reformers. We are now to consider, *thirdly*, the several things that constitute this necessity, and cause these inclinations for reformation from Popery: 'Tis lamentable that so few minds are rightly dispos'd for this, and that, from various causes, multitudes are unmoveable in this concern. Persons dead to wisdom, virtue, and religion, that have no thought or reflection, that love and sit in darkness, we leave out of the case; for when we speak of reason and necessity, we suppose that men use their sense and reason; that this necessity is the poise and spring that moves intelligent agents. Reason and interest, or self-preservation and defence, religion and conscience towards God, which obligeth to benevolence towards all men, are the constituents of this necessity.

1. There are some things abhorrent to nature. Innocent and uncorrupted nature has some strong antipathies, that arise to an indignation that cannot bear some objects. Falshood and forgery, tyranny and oppression, injustice and cruelty, hypocritical pretences to religion, only to accomplish secular and worldly purposes; such appearances indeed were sufficient to induce us to what I have defin'd the Reformation to be. Jugglers and impostors had made a prey of unwary souls, abus'd their ignorance and credulity, made them the tools of their wicked purposes to their own ruin, their ingratitude to emperors that had enriched and raised them, perverting noble institutions from their proper designs and use; the merciless authors of general

neral calamities and great mischiefs. More than *Trent* anathemas are denounced against such as these.

The mind of man is susceptible of noble passions and affections; no tyrants could be secure where honour and conscience reign in the hearts of men. They would serve them as the *Romans* did the memory of *Paul IV.* before he was well dead, all was tumult in *Rome* from the great hatred the people had conceived against him. The heads of the Pope's statues were beaten off and drawn through the streets; the inquisition he had been so fond of burnt, and the prisoners released, and all the moveable arms and monuments of the house of *Caraffa* torn in pieces. So that you see there are such circumstances of things here, that if men hold their peace the stones of the street cry out.

2. A necessity of interest, self-preservation and defence. The claims of the papacy are sufficiently evident, that they oppress our liberties, challenge all our properties, bring us under the lash of most terrible censures, and that direful excommunication, that through the ignorance and bigotry of the people hath been the disgrace and ruin of many illustrious princes and their dominions. *Sixtus Quintus*, who had been, as some tell us, originally a hog-driver, and rose to the Popedom to feed the sheep of Christ, had the insolence to excommunicate *Henry IV.* of *France*, * and to declare him incapable of succeeding to the crown; proudly boasting, that he being in the high station and in the full power that the King of Kings and Lord of Lords had given him, he declared him and others hereticks, and every body knows the consequences of that. They can tell kings with a most haughty air, that if they touch their power or take from them

* *Moyens furs & honêtes pour la convers. des heretiques. Mez. life of H. IV. p. 367.*

them their obedience, they will take from them their kingdom and the communion of Christendom; that their pen, ink, and paper, that is, their bulls, are not inferior to those of kings, to their arrets and acts of Parliament.

The pride and power of the *Roman* pontiff has been abated by the blessed reformation, but they still have the same inclinations to tyranny, and only want opportunity to act over again the same pride and violence by which so many have been made miserable.

3. The main spring and force of this is conscience; the sense of our duty to God. This appear'd in all the steps of the reformation, and nothing else could have engaged the reformers to disturb the course of error and the reign of Popery at so great a hazard, and with so unequal forces. But *conscience is a heavy weight, grave pondus*; the call of God an awful sound, and the firm persuasion of this an all-sufficient support. Faith will bear us up and carry us on.

Whatever peace and emolument we might have secured by silence and submission to long continued usurpations, the call of God would have disturbed all our tranquillity. Whatever they that impudently call themselves the church, and the only catholic church, the only true ministry and pastors, may with noise and confidence challenge, we see clearly their impostures and corruptions, their superstition and idolatry, their antichristian doctrines and opposition to the truths of the gospel; and are sure that God calls us and all persons to whom his word comes, to separate and come out from among them. The record of this call and command to *Abraham*, with the commendation of his faith set before us as an example to us, become a real call to us, as if the God of glory that appear'd to him had appeared to us. Christ and his apostles by preaching and delivering the gospel truth, and
by

by warning us of false apostles and deceitful workers, call all men every where to adhere to the truth as it is in Jesus.

The ministry that they instituted we are bound to set up: * the assemblies of Christians which they commanded we are bound to frequent: the sacraments they instituted we are bound to observe: and we are sure, that where two or three are met together in the name of Christ, he will be with them; they have his authority, and shall have his blessing. Now should we neglect his call, or corrupt his institutions, we tremble at the anathema that would then indeed belong to us.---God speaks, as he did to *Pharaoh* by *Moses* and *Aaron*, Let my people go: and Protestants say, as they, Let us sacrifice unto the Lord our God, lest he fall upon us.---We know that if we deny Christ before men, he will deny us before his Father. Conscience obliges us to be concern'd for the honour of God; his name is concern'd, and his good ways are blasphemed, the religion of the blessed Jesus misrepresented and made contemptible to infidels, who from their notions of it from the principles and practices, and the superstitious ceremonies of the *Roman* church. Zeal therefore for the honour of our Redeemer excites us.

The dangerous delusions of a multitude of poor souls move our compassion, and we cannot but think our separation from the *Roman* communion necessary, to hold out a light of warning and direction

* *Claude Hist.* Def. of the Reformat. part 4. p. 97. It seems to me says a great Defender of the Reformation, that the firm opinion of the absolute necessity of episcopacy, that goes so high as to own no church, or call or ministry, or sacraments or salvation in the world, where there are no episcopal ordinations, altho' there should be the true faith, the true doctrine and piety there, and which would that all religion should depend on a formality which he thought he had shown to be a human institution.—I cannot, says he, avoid having at least a contempt of those kind of thoughts, and a compassion for those who fill their heads with them.

rection to them. 'Tis conscience therefore of our duty to God and man, and that fidelity that we owe to Jesus Christ our only Lord, that bind this necessity upon us.

This engages us, who are called to minister in the gospel, to call upon you and warn you of your danger, and stir you up to your duty to watch against the attempts of those that lie in wait to deceive you. Maintain your separation from the corruptions and abominations of Popery. Who would not fly from *Sodom*, tho' it were but to *Zoar*? Who would look back, that was once warn'd of the judgments that must sooner or later be poured down on *Babylon*?* There is a voice from heaven, the whole word of God speaks this to us, a necessity is upon you, and woe to you if you believe not or obey not the call of God; Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues---for strong is the Lord God, who judgeth her. Should we not then go out, should we ever think of returning? Who would not leave *Jerusalem* itself, as the first Christians did, when they are warned of God? for even the temple of God itself can be no security to those that had crucified the son of God, and refused to have him reign over them; much less can the pretended vicar of Christ protect those by his indulgences, absolutions and pardons, who join themselves to the corrupters of the gospel of Christ.

Therefore let us continue Protestants indeed, and we shall not in the end repent of any labours, hazards or expences, that it may cost us. Let us adhere to our bible; let us be humble and cautious, look to God by daily fervent prayer, that he that has called us to go out of *Babylon*, would conduct us to the end.

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Let us be humble and cautious, not too severe upon imperfect, differing or erring Protestants: let us keep our own conscience void of offence, and leave others to their great master. Let us not seek the praise of men, or be discouraged at their censures. Judge nothing before its time, but wait for that time, whenever one shall receive their praise of God.

We rejoice in the reformation of *Germany, Switzerland, Geneva, France* (as it once was, oh that it were such now) and the churches of *England and Scotland!* but our reformation must be according to our light, from the word of God and the dictates of a sincerely enquiring conscience; we must so worship God as we think will be most acceptable to him, and leave others so to do, without uncharitable censures or any separation; but what we are forced to by unlawful terms of communion insisted on, and imposed on us. To this we have a call of God, and let us commit ourselves to him, and obey it faithfully, and his promises will be made good to the full: so I shall conclude, as this lecture began; Let us maintain a becoming jealousy, lest, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, our minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus.

A SECOND
DISCOURSE
CONCERNING

Transubstantiation :

IN WHICH THE

Sixth Chapter of St. *John's* Gospel is
particularly considered.

PREACH'D AT

Salters-Hall, April 22, 1735.

By *W. HARRIS*, D.D.

JOHN vi. 53.

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye
eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink
his blood, ye have no life in you.*

THO' the principal support of the doctrine
of *Transubstantiation* is drawn from the
words of the institution of the Lord's-sup-
per, which I have already considered; yet
because this discourse of our Lord in this chapter is
O o made

made great use of to this purpose by the Popish writers, and particularly insisted on in the late *Profession of faith*, and is the only place in the New Testament besides, which can give any colour or countenance to it; I have therefore thought it might be proper to consider this matter at this time, which has been so often mistaken by them, and perhaps is not always distinctly understood among ourselves. It will be sufficient to the present purpose, and lead us to take in the whole chapter, so far as it relates to this subject, to consider a little particularly these two enquiries: 1. Whether this discourse of our Lord has any direct relation to the *Lord's-supper*? 2. If it has any reference to it, Whether there is any ground in it for the doctrine of *Transubstantiation*?

I. Whether it has any *direct* relation to the Lord's-supper: *i. e.* Whether this was the primary design of it, and what our Lord intended to instruct the people about at this time: If it was not, there can be no pretence for this doctrine in this discourse; and that it has no *direct* relation to it will I think sufficiently appear, by considering all the circumstances of the case, and fixing the true sense of it, *viz.* the *occasion* of speaking it; the *persons* to whom it was directed; the *time* of it, and the proper *meaning* of it, as here explained by our Lord himself.

1. Let us consider to this purpose the *occasion* of it. If we consult the former part of the chapter, we shall find that this was the miracle of the *loaves*, and the mention of the *manna* in the wilderness. When our Lord having crossed the sea, or the lake of *Galilee* in that part of it which washes the city of *Tiberias*, which was built by *Herod* in honour of *Tiberius Cæsar*; and went into the desert for greater retirement, the multitude who had seen his miracles followed him. The compassionate Re-
decmer,

deemer, who was concerned for the bodies as well as the souls of the men, was solicitous for their refreshment in so desolate a place, and *fed five thousand men, besides the women and children, with five barley loaves, and two small fishes*: John vi. 11. A small provision for so great a number; but he *knew what he would do*; ver. 6. for when they were all filled they gathered the fragments together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments which remained over and above to them who had eaten, ver. 12, 13. Each of the twelve disciples filled his basket with fragments, as they had distributed the loaves to the people. Upon the sight of this miracle the multitude were so struck with amazement and conviction, that they said, *This is of a truth that prophet who should come into the world*, ver. 14. i. e. the promised Messiah who has been so long expected: and in the sudden transport of their zeal, were for taking him by force and making him their king; ver. 15. They were for lifting under him as their head and chief, agreeably to the worldly notions and spirit of the carnal Jews, expecting probably under such a captain to be delivered from the power of the Romans, as the Israelites were by Moses from the Egyptians.

When they came back to Capernaum the next day, following Jesus and the disciples who departed the evening before, our Lord knowing the temper of their minds, and the motives of their action, reproved them for their worldly-mindedness; *Ye seek me not because ye saw the miracle, and attended to the true design of it, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled*; ver. 21. and called off their minds from earthly things, and put them upon believing in him. He took the advantage of feeding their bodies to instruct their minds. They took offence at the freedom he used with them, and altered their mind and behaviour towards him: So changeable and inconstant is the mind of the mul-

itude, and so easily, and sometimes unreasonably, do they run into the greatest extremes. They now demanded a sign of him; *What sign shewest thou then, that we may believe? What dost thou work?* This was very unreasonable, when the multitude had followed him over the sea, because they *saw the miracles he had done on them who were diseased*; John vi. ver. 2. and they had seen the miracles of the loaves but the day before. Upon this occasion, they tell him of the manna in the wilderness; *Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, as 'tis written, He gave them bread from heaven,* ver. 31. q. d. If thou wouldst have us believe on thee, let us see such a miracle as *Moses* wrought in the wilderness, when he fed a whole nation of men for forty years, with bread from heaven. This was said by way of diminution and disparagement of the miracle he had wrought.

These two things occasioned our Lord's discourse in the following part of the chapter, and led him to speak of himself in this manner, under the figure of the *bread of God*, and the *bread from heaven*: ver. 32, 33. a way of speaking familiar in our Lord's discourses, and common among the *Jews*. So he took occasion from the *water of Jacob's well*, to discourse to the woman of *Samarita*, of the *waters of life*. chap. iv. This therefore was very agreeable to the occasion, and a natural transition to such a description of himself, without any need to suppose the sacrament intended by it, which is not once mentioned throughout the whole chapter, nor any of the outward signs which belong to it; and which the occasion did not at all lead him to. This will further appear if you consider,

2. The *persons* who were spoken to. 'Tis plain from the beginning of the chapter, that they were the people of *Capernaum*, who had followed him into the desert, and seen his miracles; and that they were spoken in the synagogue, where our Lord
was

was used to take all opportunities of instructing the people, and teaching his doctrine; *These things said he in the synagogue as he taught at Capernaum.* John vi. 59.

Now it will be to our present purpose to consider the *temper* and character under which they are here represented. It plainly appears, that they were *worldly-minded* and insincere; for they followed him not for the *miracle*, but for the *loaves*, ver. 26. and only to be fed and entertained by him, without their own labour and care. They were offended at him when he calls them to seek heavenly things, and to *labour not for the meat which perisheth*, but for *that which endureth to everlasting life*, ver. 27. And when he first told them of the *bread of God which cometh down from heaven*, and *giveth life to the world*; ver. 34. which they understood of the present life, and then they said, *Evermore give us this bread: Tho' Moses wrought many other miracles*, they only take notice of the manna in the wilderness. They were wholly intent upon present good, and sensible gratification. They *mined earthly things*, and set their hearts and *affections upon things on the earth, not on things above*, and were like those who *served not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies.* Rom. xvi. 18.

And they were *prejudiced* and captious, who instead of being willing to be instructed, and attend to his doctrine, misconstrued his words, and understood him in a gross and carnal manner, contrary to the occasion and true design of them: So they *murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread of life which came down from heaven.* John vi. 40. They cavilled at his birth and kindred, and reproached him with his mean descent and appearance; *Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know; how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?* ver. 42. as if they would

charge him with a falshood. So when our Lord tells them, *No man can come unto me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him*; John vi. 44, 65. he don't design to *excuse* them, but to *blame* them. He drew them with the *cords of a man*, Hosea xi. 4. by the powerful motives of his doctrine and miracles, and the common influences of his grace; and so the Father is drawing men to Christ wherever the gospel comes; but they drew back, and always *resisted the holy Ghost*, Acts vii. 51. They wrested his words with great perverseness; *The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?* John vi. 52. Some among the disciples, who seemed to own and follow him, said, *This is a hard saying, who can bear it?* ver. 60. too hard to be digested; and afterwards *went back and followed no more with him*, ver. 66. * They quitted their appearing profession and regard to him when they found his doctrine was not for their turn, and was wholly calculated to promote their spiritual good, not their worldly interests and ends. Upon this account he tells them; *You also have seen me, or known me, † and believed not.* ver. 36. This was the true reason of their offence, not the want of sufficient means of conviction; for they saw his miracles, the evidences of his divine authority and commission; but because they were not rightly disposed towards him, and did not like his doctrine.

* ἐκ τούτων may either refer to χρόνῳ or to πρῶτος understood; from that *time*, or upon the occasion of that *discourse*: Our translators follow the former; I think the latter more natural.

† ἐπαύετε may probably signify a *transient* and careless view of things without due consideration, or close attention of mind to the true reason and design of them: but in the 40th, where he says, *Every one who hath seen the Son, and believeth on him, hath everlasting life*; the word θεωρεῖν may signify a close and *attentive* consideration, or deep contemplating and weighing the circumstances and reasons of the case, which belongs to upright minds, and is productive of faith.

doctrine. And he upbraids them at another time, *Thou Capernaum, who art exalted up unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained to this day: It will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day judgment, than for thee,* Matt. xi. 23. They were incurably obstinate in their infidelity under all their advantages for faith, and tho' it was the place of his ordinary residence, and mighty works.

Now is it at all likely, or suitable to this state of things, that our Lord should tell such people as these, in such circumstances, and upon such an occasion, of the sacrament of the Lord's-supper; the sacred institution peculiar to his followers, who were so disposed towards him, and were ready to forsake him? Would it not have been quite disagreeable to his usual conduct, to go off from the immediate occasion of his discourse, to a thing so foreign to it, and to persons so improper, and who were never like to have any concern in it? Add to this,

3. The *time* of it, or when our Lord held this discourse with the *Caparnaites*. 'Tis a circumstance of some consideration, and will give further light to the matter, if we can fix the time when it was spoken. It appears from the beginning of the chapter, that it was about the time of the passover: *And the passover, the feast of the Jews was nigh;* ver. 4. or near approaching. The passover was an annual commemoration of their deliverance out of *Egypt*, and the greatest *festival* in the Jewish church, and which occasioned the greatest resort from all quarters. It was observed in the middle of the month *Nisan*, which answers to our *March*, and so accounts for the expression in the 10th verse, that there was *much grass in the place* where the five thousand were made to sit down.

This discourse happened a little *before* the celebration of the passover; and we find by the evangelists, that the Lord's-supper was instituted *at* the time of the passover, a little before his sufferings. Now supposing it was only the third passover after his baptism, which is the lowest computation, for some think it was the second; and there will be above a year's distance from the time of this discourse to the time of the institution. So that the Lord's-supper was not yet in being, and was not instituted till at least a whole year after. It can't be thought reasonable that our Lord should speak directly in a large discourse, to a multitude of people who were now offended with him, and grown averse to him, and of whom many forsook him, as soon as he had finished it, of the prime ordinance of the gospel worship, so long before the institution of it, and of which, I think, we find not the least mention or allusion to it, in any part of the gospel besides.

And tho' he speaks to them of his death, or giving *his flesh for the life of the world*, which was at as great a distance as the institution of the sacrament; yet that was the prime design of his coming into the world, and was only occasionally dropt under covert expressions, and not the professed subject of it neither. 'Tis much more reasonable to suppose that his discourse should turn upon some useful subject, and which more immediately concerned themselves, and was more suitable to the temper of the people, and the present circumstances of things, than that he should speak to them of a thing irrelative to the subject and occasion of it, which was not now in being, and could not be understood by any who heard it. But to come nearer to the matter;

4. Let us consider the proper *meaning* of this discourse, as here explained by our Lord himself. And because this is the most direct and considerable proof,

proof, and upon which the merits of the cause must turn, I shall represent it more distinctly.

Now I observe in the first place, That our Lord explains himself by *believing* in him, or receiving and embracing his doctrine: And this he not only dropt occasionally, but is carried quite thro' the chapter, and repeated over and over, to lead them to a right sense of his words, and guard them from misconstruction. Thus he tells them, *This is the work of God, that ye BELIEVE on him whom he hath sent **. *I am the bread of life; he who COMETH to me shall never hunger, and he who BELIEVETH in me shall never thirst*, John vi. 29, 35. - And, *All that the Father hath given me, shall COME to me; and him who COMETH unto me, I will in no wise cast out*; ver. 37. which is a usual expression in the New Testament, to signify *believing* in him, or becoming his disciples, and taking him for our teacher and Lord. So again, *This is the will of him who sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and BELIEVETH in him, may have everlasting life*, ver. 40. And in another expression of great force to the same purpose: *He who eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, DWELLETH in me, and I in him*, ver. 56. This is explained by the same apostle, *He who dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him*, 1 John iv. 16. The sense is, he loveth me, and delighteth in me, and is thereby intimately united to me, and communicates from me, as the branches from the vine, or the food which is digested and incorporated with the body; and I have a special favour and regard to him, and will be present with him, and manifest myself to him.

From

* The allusion here is lost in our translation, which would appear by thus rendering the 27th, *Work not chiefly for the meat which perisheth*, ἐργάζεσθε. 28th, *What shall we do, that we might work the works of God*, ἐργάζεσθε. 29th, *This is the work of God*, τὸ ἔργον.

From all this it appears plainly, That he speaks in these figurative expressions, taken from the occasion of his discourse, of *believing* in him or receiving his doctrine which he brought from heaven, and which is the proper food of the soul, as bread is of the body; all the precepts of purity and humility, of meekness and patience, of self-denial and heavenly-mindedness, and particularly the doctrine of his death, or *giving his life for the world*. And though this may seem a harsh figure in our language, yet it was very agreeable to the Jewish idiom, and easily understood among the Jews. Nothing was more frequent in the eastern languages, than to represent receiving a doctrine, and hearkning to instruction, by *eating* and *drinking it*, or imbibing and digesting it, as proper nourishment and food. So we read in the Old Testament: *Wisdom* is introduced saying. *Come eat of my bread, and drink of my wine, which I have mingled*; Prov. ix. 5. *i. e.* the instructions which I have prepared: *Eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight it self in fatness*, ver. 6. *Ho, every one who thirsteth, come to the waters of life; come buy and eat; buy wine and milk, without money and without price*. Isa. lv. 1. And in the New Testament, our Lord speaks in the same figure: *Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness*, Matt. v. 6. And he says of himself, *My meat is to do the will of him who sent me*, John iv. 34. The apostle speaks of being *nourished up in the words of faith and sound doctrine*. 1 Tim. iv. 6. The first principles of christianity are called *milk for babes*, and the *sincere milk of the word*; and more improved knowledge, *meat for strong men*, Heb. v. 13, 14. The expression of *his flesh and blood*, in this sense, is no harder to be understood, than when the apostle says of the Christians, *Ye are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*, Eph. v. 30. *

Besides,

* The Talmudists frequently mention *eating the Messiah*, for partaking

Besides, I observe again, That this *eating* and *drinking* stands connected with *eternal life*. This is very remarkable in the whole discourse, and repeated upon all occasions: He keeps this still in view, and holds it up to them continually, as the great benefit and advantage by him, and the necessary and inseparable consequence and effect of it. To this purpose 'tis remarkable, That he prefers it to the *manna* in the wilderness. When the *Jews* said, *Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness*; he answers, *My Father gives you the true bread from heaven, and which giveth life to the world*, John vi. 32, 33. And, *This is the bread which came down from heaven, not as your fathers did eat bread in the wilderness, and are dead; but he who eateth of this bread shall live for ever*, ver. 49. And again, *This is the bread which came down from heaven, that he may eat thereof and not die*, ver. 58. 'Tis of a nobler original, of a more excellent kind; it serves a higher purpose, and is of a greater extent. 'Tis bread from heaven, and the bread of life, and which gives life to the world, and of which he who eateth shall live for ever.

So he speaks all along of *life* as the consequence of it; *He who cometh to me shall never hunger, and he who believeth in me shall never thirst*, ver. 35. He shall want no necessary help, and shall be satisfied with suitable good. So the final felicity is represented, *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more*, Rev. vii. 16. And, *This is the will of him who sent me, that every one who seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day*, John vi. 40. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he who believeth on me hath everlasting*

taking of his benefits. *Lightf.* Horæ Heb. in Joh. vi. 53. And *Philo Judæus* says, τὸ φάγειν ἐστὶ συμβολὸν τροφῆς ψυχικῆς. *De Leg. Alleg.* And *Clem. Alexan.* Βασίς γὰρ καὶ πῶσις τῶ θεῷ λόγος ἡ γνῶσις ἐστὶ τῆς θείας οὐσίας. *Strom. Lib. 5.*

lasting life, ver. 47. hath a present right, and is secure of the future possession. As the living Father sent me, and I live by the Father, so he who eateth me shall live by me. And, he who eateth this bread shall live for ever, John vi. 57, 58. Here is life, and everlasting life; and raising up at the last day, to signify a state of glorious blessedness and immortality. So our Lord tells the woman of Samaria, in the same figure of speech, But whosoever drinketh of the waters which I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the waters which I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. John iv. 14.

Now as all these various representations import something special and peculiar to the persons of whom they are spoken, and plainly signify the great blessings of the gospel, and benefit by the death of Christ; so they all agree to the true sense of the expressions as here represented and explained; that is, as they signify *faith* in him, or an hearty embracing his doctrine with an answerable subjection and dependence upon him. This is the great doctrine of the Gospel, and constant language of it, particularly in the writings of this apostle: *He who believeth shall be saved, Mark xvi. 16. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life, John iii. 16. And, He who believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life, ver. 36. These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life thro' his name, ch. xx. 31. And, God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live thro' him, 1 John iv. 10.*

But how does this agree to the *sacrament*? Do all who partake of that obtain everlasting life; and is this the necessary consequence of it? Will it secure life to all who ever once partake of it? what-

whatsoever they are otherwise? Did Judas obtain eternal life, supposing he partook of the Lord's supper, as well as the rest of the apostles, when our Lord says here, *Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?* John vi. 70. Does every wicked man and unbeliever, who continues under the power of sin, and is condemned by the gospel, nevertheless obtain everlasting life, if he comes to the sacrament? Can this be thought possible by any who believes the doctrine of Christ, or considers the nature of the future blessedness? No, the sacrament may be eaten and drunken *unworthily*, and to *condemnation*, but true faith is always connected with eternal life. And is this absolutely *necessary* to this end, and can none be saved without it? Can it be said in this sense, *Except you eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the son of man, you have no life in you?* Then, in the strictness of the expression, good men who died under the Old Testament and before Christ suffered, are perished, and could not have everlasting life, tho' they all *eat of the same spiritual meat, and drank of the same spiritual drink*, 1 Cor. x. 3. *i.e.* were true believers, according to the dispensation they were under. And then what must become of those who thro' discouragement and fear, or by any necessary and unavoidable means, as by sickness, or distance, are prevented and disabled all their lives? If then the case stands thus, as we plainly see it does, that the *eating his flesh and drinking his blood*, which is here spoken of, is necessarily connected with everlasting life, it cannot be understood of *sacramental* eating, but only of *believing* in him.

I observe again in the next place, That our Lord himself represents it as a *spiritual* thing, and to be *spiritually* understood. Besides the frequent expressions which run thro' the whole chapter to point out the true meaning, and guard against mistakes, when our Lord perceived that some of the disciples appeared

appeared dissatisfied, as well as the *Jews* murmured; he spake more directly to them in the close, and gave them the true *key* of the whole discourse; *It is the spirit which quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: The words which I speak unto you; they are spirit, and they are life;* John vi. 63. *q. d.* The spirit is the principle of life to the flesh, and gives it vigour and motion; and when the spirit is withdrawn, the flesh signifies nothing, and cannot preserve its own life; so 'tis the spiritual sense of my words which has only power to give you life: the carnal sense can be of no use to this purpose, no; though you could eat my natural flesh. The words which I have spoken to you in this discourse are spiritual and efficacious; to be understood in a spiritual sense, and able to give life to the soul, as the spirit does to the flesh; and you ought to understand me all along of spiritual actions, and what relates to spiritual improvement, or the nourishment and food of the mind. 'Tis not therefore my living flesh, as you absurdly imagine; but my word and doctrine, which will make you spiritually alive, and live for ever. So the apostle says of the Jewish meats, *'Tis a good thing that the heart be established with grace;* i. e. the gospel; or doctrine of grace, opposed to *diverse and strange doctrines*, in the former part of the verse; and *not with meats which have not profited them who have been occupied therein,* Heb. xii. 9.

So 'tis plain the apostle *Peter* understood our Lord, tho' the *Jews* murmured and mistook him; for when upon occasion of some of the disciples going back, and walking no more with him, he said to the rest of them, *Will ye also go away?* Peter readily replies, *Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life?* which plainly refers to what our Lord had said just before, *My words are spirit, and they are life:* Thy doctrine is the means of spiritual life, and the true way to eternal life; or in the language
of

of the apostle, the words of this life; Acts v. 20. or words whereby we must be saved, ch. xi. 14.

This might be farther illustrated by the parallel discourse of our Lord to *Nicodemus*, when he stumbled at our Lord's expression of being *born again*, as the *Jews* here murmured at his talking to them of *eating his flesh*, and said, *Can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?* John iii. 4. as they said here, *How can this man give us his flesh to eat?* ver. 5. Our Lord answers, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, which is exactly parallel to the words of the text, Except you eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you:* It follows, that *which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit*; that is, 'Tis the spirit which quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. When he still continued perplexed, and said, *How can these things be?* Our Lord replies, *Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?* Art thou a learned man, and one of the great council, and understandest not what is so frequent in the Jewish language, and the writings of the rabbi's? Art thou unacquainted with the practice of the Jewish church, who, when they baptize a proselyte, call him a *new man*, and say, he is *born again*? *

I shall only further observe, That this discourse of our Lord was understood in this sense by the *antients*, who have any occasion to mention it, as far as I have observed, in the first three centuries. *Clemens Alexandrinus* † says directly, “ When our Lord says, *Eat my flesh and drink my blood*, he allegorically means the drink of faith, and of the promises; and that our Lord is by way of allegory, to them who believe, meat, and flesh, and
“ nourish-

* Vid. Lightf. Horæ Heb. in Joh. iv.

† Ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς εὐαγγελίας τὸ τότε μόνον ἀλλήγορεῖν, τὸ δὲ ἅμα εἶναι; ἀλλεγορεῖται. Clem. Alex. Pædag. c. 6.

“nourishment, and food.” *Tertullian* * says, “Our Lord urges his intent by allegory, and calls his word *flesh*, to be devoured by the ear, ruminated upon by the mind, and digested by faith.” *Origen* † says, “We are said to drink of his blood, when we receive his word, in which life consists; and that he feeds mankind with the flesh and blood of his word, as with pure meat and drink.” *Eusebius* ‡ says expressly, “His word and doctrine are flesh and blood.” And *Jerom* ** says, “In the true sense, the body and blood of Christ, is the word and doctrine of the scripture.”

And now, I think it seems plain upon the whole, That this discourse of our Lord relates to his doctrine and instruction, and must be understood in a spiritual and figurative sense; and that the Lord’s-supper is not at all directly spoken of or intended, but quite another thing, as the proper subject of it. Having spoken so largely of the first enquiry, I shall need to be briefer on the second.

II. Whether if this discourse at all refer to the sacrament, there is any ground in it for the doctrine of *Transubstantiation*? And here I shall not propose to argue from the nature of the thing, but only from our Lord’s discourse in this place; and that there is no sufficient ground for it, even upon that supposition, will appear from the following considerations.

1. If the Lord’s-supper is not the *direct* subject of the discourse, but quite another thing, as we have shewed before; then nothing can be *inferred* from

* *Auditū devorandus, ruminandus intellectu, & fide digerendus.*
De Resur. carnis, cap. 36, 37.

† *Orig. Homil. 16, 17.*

‡ *ὡς ἐὰν αὐτὰ εἶναι τὰ ῥήματα καὶ τῆς λόγου; αὐτῶν τὴν σάρκα καὶ τὸ αἷμα.* De Ecclesiast. Theol. l. 3. c. 12.

** *Licet &c. de mysterio possit intelligi, tamen verius corpus Christi, & sanguis ejus, sermo scripturarum est.* In Psal. 147.

from it, or built upon it, which relates to it. If our Lord is not professedly speaking of the sacrament, but of believing in him, and embracing his doctrine, then it cannot be inferred from hence, that we *eat his flesh, and drink his blood*, in a literal sense, in the Lord's-supper; for that would be an inference without any foundation, and would be inferring one thing of a quite different nature from another; as if I should say, 'tis mid-day because 'tis high tide, or dark night because 'tis low ebb, where there is no necessary connexion. We might at this rate infer any thing from any thing, and argue without any principles to proceed upon, and draw conclusions without premises.

If the true sense of these words has been rightly represented, there can be no pretence for the doctrine of *Transubstantiation* in them, and nothing but the meer *sound* of the words in two or three verses, without any regard to the true sense of them, or any relation to the context, and the evident occasion and design of the whole discourse. If the Lord's-supper is not the direct subject of it, however it may be alluded to, but spiritual eating and drinking by faith; a meer allusion can be no sufficient ground to raise any doctrine whatsoever, much less to justify any absurd and unreasonable opinion about it. It would be foreign to the matter, if the doctrine were never so true, and could not, at least, be inferred or proved from hence. This rank weed does not grow in this good soil: 'Tis no *plant of our heavenly Father's planting*. And this alone, if there was no other consideration, would be sufficient to strike off this pretence, and discharge this scripture from this service. But this is not all; for,

2. If there were any reference to the Lord's-supper in this discourse, it would evidently conclude the *wrong* way, and be so far from establishing Transubstantiation, that it would quite overthrow it. "Transubstantiation is a wonderful conversion of

“ the whole substance of bread and wine in
 “ the Lord’s-supper, into the whole body and
 “ blood of Christ, so that there is no substance
 “ of bread and wine remaining, but only the
 “ accidents and appearances of them.” Now it
 falls out very unhappily here, that the whole turn
 of our Lord’s discourse is quite opposite to this;
 for he speaks of himself as become *bread*, and under
 the notion of *bread*; not of bread becoming
himself. He does not say, The bread which you
 are to eat will become my body, and the wine, my
 blood; but he says on the contrary, *I am the bread*
of life: John vi. 35. *I am the living bread which*
came down from heaven; ver. 51. and the *bread of*
God which came down from heaven. ver. 58. He is
 the *living bread*, as well as the *bread of life*, who is
 himself living, as well as gives life to others,
 which cannot be said of any other bread. So
my flesh is meat indeed, * *my blood drink indeed*;
 ver. 55. as he is the *true light* and the *true vine*,
 to signify not so much the *propriety* as the *excellency*
 of it; that ’tis perfect in its kind, and preferable to
 all others. This representation of himself runs
 thro’ the whole chapter. He came from heaven to
 be the living bread, on which we are to feed and be
 nourished; not the bread to become Christ, or his
 real flesh and blood. This plainly contradicts and
 overturns the doctrine of Transubstantiation, in-
 stead of supporting, or giving any countenance to
 it.

And when he speaks of *eating his flesh*, and *drink-
 ing his blood*, it plainly relates to his *death*, and not
 to the *sacrament*; and means the same thing which
 he had before called *bread*. This appears in an-
 other verse where he joins them both together, and
 makes them equivalent expressions; *The BREAD*
which I give is my FLESH, which I give for the life
of the world. ver. 51. His *flesh* must be understood

in the same sense, in which he is said to be *bread*; for they are parallel expressions in this discourse, and both given for the same end. In the same sense therefore in which he is *bread*, in the same sense we are to *eat* him; and as the one can only be understood in a spiritual sense, for Christ cannot be literally bread, so must the other, by necessary consequence, be understood too.

And at this rate what must become of the doctrine of *communion in one kind*, when our Lord here expressly requires the *eating his flesh* AND the *drinking his blood*, as necessary to *everlasting life*: 'Tis his blood shed and poured forth, and not as contained in his body; the blood of his slain and crucified body, not of his living and glorified one; and we are to *drink*, and not to *eat* his blood: and so our Lord himself instituted it afterwards, when he said, *Drink ye all of it*, Matt. xxvi. 27. And tho' in a *figurative* sense they may both fitly signify the same thing, that is, believing in him; yet in a proper sense, as they understand it, it cannot signify the same thing, but two distinct things. So that *eating his flesh*, and *drinking his blood*, cannot be understood in the sense of *Transubstantiation*, or eating his natural flesh in the sacrament, but only of spiritual feeding on his doctrine, or believing on him.

3. Then the *Capernaïtes* were in the right, and did not *misunderstand* his doctrine. They plainly understood him in a sense somewhat like that of *Transubstantiation*, tho' not altogether so absurd; and this was the ground of their offence, and of their leaving him at last: *The Jews murmured at him because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven*, John vi. 41. *And how can this man give us his flesh to eat?* ver. 52. And some of his disciples said, *This is a hard saying, who can bear it?* ver. 60. This occasioned their murmuring and offence. They plainly understood him in a gross and carnal sense, as if he meant to give them his natural flesh

and blood to eat and drink, as the church of *Rome* understands it now.

Now then I ask, Whether they understood him right or wrong, and took his true meaning and design or not? If they understood him *right*, then why are they blamed? why does our Lord reprove them for their murmuring, and charge them with unbelief, and upbraid them for being offended? Why does he say, *Ye also have seen me and believed not?* John vi. 36. And again, *There are some of you who believe not*, ver. 64. *Does this also offend you?* ver. 61. Why is this made an argument of unreasonable prejudice and offence, and reckoned an error and fault in them? It was certainly a gross mistake of his meaning, and a great stupidity in them, to understand him in so unreasonable a sense, when he had dropt so many hints to secure his meaning, and such ways of expression were so usual and well known among the *Jews*. Will any man of sobriety and understanding pretend to justify the *Capernaïtes*, and maintain that they understood him in the sense he designed? I am sure that several of the greatest interpreters in the church of *Rome* understand it otherwise, as cardinal *Cajetan*, *Janſonius*, and others; and the *council of Trent* itself, after long debates about it, thought fit to compromise the matter, and leave it undetermined. *

If, on the contrary, they understood him *wrong*, then *Transubstantiation* cannot be right, and that sense of the words must necessarily be false; for that cannot be right in the *one*, which was wrong in the *other*. If the *Jews* mistook his meaning, the *Papists* cannot take it right. They plainly run into the same error which he blamed here in the carnal *Jews*. If this was the thing intended in these expressions, then they understood him, in the main, right ;

* Utcunque juxta varias Patrum & Doctorum interpretationes intelligatur. *Conc. Trid. Sess. 21. c. 1.*

right; and did not mistake his meaning; and there was no ground of offence, and forsaking him; or if there was, it was not owing to their *prejudices* and misunderstanding, but to the *nature* of his doctrine; and that indeed would always be a ground of offence to upright and disinterested men to the end of the world.

4. I argue from our Lord's *ascension* to heaven. This is referred to here: *When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if you shall see the son of man ascending up where he was before?* John vi. 61, 62. Some understand these words to refer to their objection against his *parentage*, and his calling himself the *bread of life which came down from heaven*, which is mentioned in *ver. 58*. You cannot wonder that I said I came down from heaven, when you shall see me ascend to heaven, and go up in a visible glory with the attendance of angels, from whence I came. This he often calls *going to the father*. He had spoken of this before; *No Man hath ascended up into heaven, but he who came down from heaven, even the son of man who is in heaven*, ch. iii. 13. The same person was to ascend to heaven, who came down from heaven, and as a proof and evidence that he did so. And when he ascended to heaven, he *sat on the right hand of God*: He resides and dwells there, invested with the highest dignity, and sovereign authority, and therefore cannot be bodily present here on earth.

But the reference seems more likely to *ver. 56*. where he speaks of *eating his flesh*, and *eating him*, and *living by him*, and *living for ever*; and their objection to him upon that account, *How can this man give us his flesh to eat?* and, *This is a hard saying, who can hear it?* Which is the immediate connexion of the words, and relates to the disciples who were to see him ascend: In relation to this, he says, *What and if you shall see the son of man ascend*

up where he was before? q. d. You cannot think of eating my flesh on earth, when you shall see me ascend to heaven. This will be a sensible demonstration to the contrary, and make the thought of it utterly unreasonable and absurd. It will appear impossible to eat my natural flesh, when you shall see me ascend, tho' you must always do it in the sense I intend. So one of the antients * says, "He tells them of his ascension to draw off their minds from the gross conceptions of corporal eating his flesh."

This is plainly the force of our Lord's reasoning in this place; and tho' some men have found a way to bring down Christ from heaven to be sacrificed to God afresh, and continually devoured by men, yet this will reduce the matter to this plain opposition, that either *Transubstantiation* must destroy this reasoning of our Lord, or this reasoning will destroy *Transubstantiation*: And which of these is the more reasonable, *judge ye within yourselves*.

I shall only further observe here, That tho' two or three of the antient writers chiefly after the third century, seemed to think, that this discourse might relate to the Lord's-supper, or at least be an *allusion* to it, and be fitly *accommodated* to it, as some devotional writers among the moderns also do; yet none of them ever understood it in the sense of *Transubstantiation*, or for literal eating his natural flesh, and drinking his blood, but only of eating and drinking him spiritually, and by faith, with respect to his doctrine and death; which tho' 'tis peculiarly proper in the ordinance of the Lord's-supper, yet was their present duty at that time, and is a necessary duty at all times, as well without the use of the sacrament, as with it. I shall only give you the testimony of St. *Austin* *

to

* *ὅτι τῆς συναινεῖς ἐνοίας αὐτοῦ ἀφαιρούσῃ.* Athan. in illud Evang. *Quicumque dixerit.*

* Si præceptiva est locutio, aut flagitium aut facinus vetans, aut

to this purpose, tho' in his later writings, he was of the same opinion with the more ancient Fathers, as appears in his book *De civitate Dei*. He lays down this excellent rule of interpreting scripture; "If the saying is preceptive, either forbidding a wicked action, or commanding to do that which is good, it is no *figurative* saying; but if it seem to command any wicked thing, or forbid what is profitable and good, it is *figurative*. This saying, *Except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you*, seems to command a wicked and flagitious thing; it is therefore a *figure*, enjoining us to communicate in the passion of our Lord, and lay it up in dear remembrance that his flesh was crucified and wounded for us."

I might add, that when the heathens, by misinformation, objected to the Christians their eating of man's flesh, they rejected it with detestation, and retort it upon their adversaries with great aggravation; which they could not have done with any reason and truth, or any modesty and shame, if this doctrine had been true, and they had so understood the matter. *

If

aut beneficentiam jubens, non est figurata. Si autem flagitium aut facinus videtur juberi, aut utilitatem aut beneficentiam vetari, figurata est. *Nisi manducaveritis, inquit, carnem filii hominis, & sanguinem biberitis, vitam in vobis non habebitis.* Facinus vel flagitium videtur juberi, figura ergo est, præcipiens passioni Domini esse communicandum, & suaviter atque utiliter in memoria recondendum, quod caro ejus pro nobis crucifixa & vulnerata sit. *De Doctr. Christi, Lib. 3. c. 16.*

* Ἀνθρώπων σαρκῶν βόρας ὅς' γινώσκουμεν. We Christians don't own the eating of human flesh. *Just. Mart. Apol. 2.*

Παρθένῳ ὅς' ἐστὶν ἀνθρωποφαγία. Tatian cont. Græcos.

Minutius Felix represents it as a calumny of the devil. Si ratio, non instigatio dæmonis judicaret — His enim & hujusmodi fabulis iidem dæmones ad execrationis horrorem, imperitorum aures adversus nos referferunt — Sic est negotium dæmonum; ab ipsis enim rumor falsus & seritur & foveitur. *Minutii Oct.*

Tertullian says, They might be ashamed to object it to the Christians. Hæc qui editis quantum abestis à convivii Christianorum. — Erubescat error vester Christianis, qui ne animalium quidem sanguinem in epulis esculentis habemus, *Apol. c. 9.*

If any after all should think it strange that our Lord should repeat and *continue* this figurative way of speaking throughout the chapter, and after so great a mistake of his meaning, and offence to the *Jews* and to some of the disciples; I shall only say, That as these expressions were well understood among the *Jews*, and agreeable to their manner of speaking, and he had given sufficient hints quite thro' the discourse, to lead them to his true meaning, and prevent mistake, to honest and attentive minds, and accordingly we find the twelve understood his meaning, and took no offence at it; so it was very usual in our Lord's discourses to a mixed multitude, and when he had to do with unreasonable and prejudiced men, who shewed no disposition to receive and attend to his doctrine, but only to cavil and be offended, not to open his mind so freely that they could not mistake it, to put them upon enquiry, and for the exercise of their diligence, and the trial of their sincerity; perhaps too that they might not thro' their perverseness be hardened in their opposition to him. This is the reason assigned for his speaking to them so often in parables, *Matt. xiii. 13.*

I shall conclude all with two *remarks* of a different kind, from what has been said. The one is, That there is no foundation in scripture for the antient custom of *communicating infants*. This practice began early, and continued a considerable time in the Christian church, chiefly in *Africa*, and is observed in some of the Eastern churches to this day. * But as it was plainly built upon a mistaken sense of these words, as if they related to the sacrament, and made it absolutely necessary to the salvation of every one; so when the words are rightly understood, there appears no foundation or pretence for so strange a thing. Indeed it has been disused in the church of *Rome* for several centuries,

* Ludolp. Hist. Ethiop. Lib. 3. c. 6.

ries, which however right in itself, is no great mark of her *infallibility*, and strict adherence to the *unanimous* sense of the antient Fathers in interpreting scripture, to which nevertheless their priests are sworn at their ordination.

✠ The other thing I would remark here is of a practical nature, and more importance, That we should carefully attend to the *spiritual* meaning, and true design of this discourse, that is, that we believe on Christ to everlasting life, or receive his doctrine, and depend upon his death, who came from heaven to reveal the will of God to men, and to give *his flesh for the life of the world*. It will signify nothing to our acceptance with God, and eternal life, to renounce the doctrine of *Transubstantiation* and the errors of *Popery*, if we have no participation with Christ by believing in him; if we have *no part in him*, John xiii. 8. and are not made *partakers of Christ*, Heb. iii. 14. of his spiritual benefits by a living faith.

As we have the clearest revelation of the will of God by him, and the free use of our *bible*, and many opportunities and helps for understanding it, which are denied the people in Popish countries; if we don't make an answerable improvement in a greater increase of knowledge and holiness, we shall incur a greater guilt and condemnation, and be more blameable and more miserable than they. So our Lord tells *Capernaum*, *Thou who art exalted up to heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; and it shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee*, Mat. xi. 23. *Protestants* will perish with greater gravation than *Papists*, as they have greater advantages for their salvation; and I doubt not, but the errors of the *Papists* will be less criminal than the ignorance of *Protestants*, their zeal may justly reproach our *neglects*, and Popish *superstition* will fare better than Protestant *profaneness* or *irreligion*.

Let us not satisfy ourselves with understanding the true *meaning* of the words, but attend to the great *design* of them, to bring us to true faith in Christ, and to imbibe and digest his doctrine, or *minge the word we hear with faith, that we may profit by it*, Heb. iv. 2. Let us be chiefly concerned about *eternal life*, to which he leads our thoughts quite through this discourse, and not be diverted by worldly cares, or unreasonable prejudice, from pursuing the great end of his doctrine and death, and the principal care and business of our lives. As he took occasion from earthly things, from the *loaves and manna*, to speak of spiritual and heavenly things, let us be excited by our daily diligence and care about lower things, to a more earnest and vigorous concern about spiritual good, and to *labour for the meat which perisheth not, but endureth to everlasting life*. If we attend only to the present advantage by him, and rest in a meer outward profession, as the *Jews* here followed him for the *loaves*, we shall be in danger of being *offended*, and *for-saking* him too; especially if difficulties and trials should arise: but if we consider him as having the *words of eternal life*, we shall say with the apostle, *Lord to whom shall we go but only unto thee?* and closely adhere to him, and *continue in his word*. If our hearts are *established by grace*, we shall not be *carried about with diverse and strange doctrines*, Heb. xiii. 9. nor like *children be tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine*, from whatsoever quarter it blows, *by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive*, Eph. iv. 14. If we heartily embrace his doctrine by a sound faith and subjection of soul, and feed upon the *bread of life* for our daily nourishment and strength, we shall have *everlasting life* by him, and be *raised up at the last day*.





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